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ABSTRACT

This document, part of a national study of the resettlement experience of the Hmong in the United States, describes a variety of exemplary resettlement projects and strategies. They cover six major aspects of resettlement: (1) employment; (2) education and training; (3) income supplementation and economic development; (4) housing; (5) provision of health and legal services; and (6) Hmong community formation. The projects described are not exhaustive, but are examples of innovative or noteworthy efforts during the time research was conducted (December 1982 to June 1983). Each project description contains information about the project's objectives, the history of its development and organization, the source of funding, the number of Hmong served or affected by the project, any outcomes and plans for further work or expansion of efforts, and the name and address of the person to contact for more information. (KH)

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THE HMONG RESETTLEMENT STUDY

VOLUME III

EXEMPLARY PROJECTS AND PROJECTS WITH UNIQUE FEATURES OF PROGRAMMATIC INTEREST

May 1985

Prepared for:

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The material presented herein was developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory for the United States Department of Health and Human Services. The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department of Health and Human Services and no official endorsement by the Department should be inferred.

PREFACE

The Hmong Resettlement Study is a national project funded by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement. The Study is the joint undertaking of Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (Portland, Oregon), the University of Minnesota and Lao Family Community (Santa Ana, California). The major purposes of the Study are to examine closely the resettlement of Hmong refugees in the United States, focusing on issues, and to answer the following questions:

What has been the resettlement experience of the Hmong?

- How are the Hmong faring in terms of employment, dependence, and adjustment?
- Are there areas of employment in which the Hmong have been particularly successful?
- What do resettlement workers and the Hmong regard as the major impediments to effective Hmong resettlement and self-sufficiency?
- What role does secondary migration play in the resettlement of the Hmong? What are the reasons for secondary migration among this group? What are the implications for resettlement strategies?

What resettlement efforts and economic strategies have provided effective results for the Hmong?

- How are problems being handled? What kinds of solutions are being tried, by different resettlement communities and by the Hmong themselves?
- What factors account for the effective resettlement of the Hmong in certain communities? Which resettlement efforts have proved to be the most promising?
- How many and what kinds of entrepreneurial economic development projects involving the Hmong are currently in operation, e.g., farming projects, Pa ndau cooperatives? How were they developed and how successful are they?
- What kinds of Hmong employment strategies have been particularly successful?

How might current strategies be changed to result in more effective resettlement and long-term adjustment of the Hmong?

- How might resettlement be conducted differently for the Hmong? What new projects and approaches are being considered by those involved in Hmong resettlement? How would the Hmong want resettlement to be done differently?

- How can the Hmong be resettled in a way that better utilizes their strengths and unique characteristics?

- What do the Hmong want for themselves? What do Hmong view as essential for effective resettlement? What are their goals for the future? For the next generation of Hmong?

Research conducted in the project included analysis of existing data about the Hmong, compilation of information gathered through numerous informal face-to-face and telephone conversations with Hmong informants across the country (in nearly every Hmong settlement which could be identified) and on-site observations, group meetings and personal interviews with Hmong individuals and families (as well as resettlement officials, service providers and members of the host communities). On-site case studies of Hmong resettlement were conducted in seven selected cities:

Orange County, California
Fresno, California
Portland, Oregon
Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota
Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas
Fort Smith, Arkansas
Providence, Rhode Island

Fieldwork for the case studies began in December 1982 and was completed in June 1983. The projects described in this volume represent exemplary resettlement efforts at that time.

Staff from the participating institutions worked as a team to conduct the overall project and the seven case studies and to prepare this report:

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The results of the project are available to the public as a series of reports published by the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO). Copies may be ordered from:

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Reports

Vol. 1: Final Report
Vol. 2: Economic Development
Vol. 3: Exemplary Projects
Executive Summary (written in English)
Executive Summary (written in Lao)
Executive Summary (written in Hmong)

Site Reports

Orange County, California
Fresno, California
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Fort Smith, Arkansas
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Acknowledgments

This volume could not have been compiled without the initiative and cooperation of many Hmong and Americans directly involved in the Hmong resettlement process. Unfortunately, they are too numerous to name here. Their help in identifying and describing these exemplary projects and strategies is gratefully acknowledged. However, any error of fact or misinterpretation is solely the responsibility of the authors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
I.	Introduction	1
II.	Employment	3
	Bilingual Supervisor and Second Shift of Hmong Workers at Textile Firm (Providence, Rhode Island)	4
	Jobs for New Americans (Providence, Rhode Island)	6
	Project RISE: Refugees in Search of Employment (Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota))	8
III.	Education and Training	12
	Hmong College Students Tutoring Hmong High School Students (Providence, Rhode Island)	14
	Rhode Island College Upward Bound Program (Providence, Rhode Island)	15
	The Hmong Student Association of Dallas and Fort Worth (Texas)	17
	The Lao Students Association (Santa Ana, California)	22
	Hmong Fresno County Students Association (Fresno, California)	24
	Job Training for Refugees with Limited Education-- Lao Family Vocational Training Center (Santa Ana, California)	26
	Special Training Program for Southeast Asians in Nursing (Cranston, Rhode Island)	28
	Project Regina: A Sewing Program for Hmong Women (Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota)	30
IV.	Income-supplementing and Miscellaneous Economic Strategies	35
	Indochinese Gardening Project (Providence, Rhode Island)	36
	Hmong Community Garden Cooperative (Minneapolis, Minnesota)	39
	Wilder Forest Community Farm and Garden Project (Marine-on-St. Croix, Minnesota)	43

		Page
	RAIN Mien Community Gardens and Small Farming Projects (Portland, Oregon)	46
	Group Purchase of Land for a Housing Project (Fort Smith, Arkansas)	47
	Leasing 78 Acres of Land for Cattle (Fort Smith, Arkansas)	49
	A Hmong Credit Union (Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota)	50
	Technical Assistance to Hmong MAA for Establishing Businesses (Providence, Rhode Island)	53
	The Southeast Asian Co-op (Providence, Rhode Island)	56
V.	Housing	59
	Southeast Asian Refugee Federation (SEARF) Housing Project (Portland, Oregon)	60
	Home Ownership: St. Michael's Project Resettle (Providence, Rhode Island)	64
	Home-buying in Dallas-Fort Worth (Texas)	66
VI.	Miscellaneous Strategies and Projects	72
	The Southeast Asian Health Coordination Plan (Cranston, Rhode Island)	73
	Group Legal Services (Fresno, California)	75
	Special Dental Practice (Fresno, California)	79
	Formation of a Hmong Colony in Fort Smith (Arkansas)	79
	Dallas-Fort Worth Hmong Resettlement Philosophy (Texas)	86

I. Introduction

During the course of this national study of the resettlement experience of the Hmong in the United States, numerous strategies and projects came to light which seemed to be effective or promising ways of addressing some of the major issues confronting the Hmong as they strive to adapt and become self-sufficient here. Volumes 1 and 2 of the Study's final reports discuss the issues of resettlement and current economic development activities in detail; this third volume presents descriptions of some exemplary resettlement projects and strategies. They cover many aspects of resettlement, including: employment, education and training, income supplementation and economic development, housing, provision of health and legal services, and Hmong community formation.

The projects or strategies presented in this volume were selected by the Hmong Resettlement Study's research team while they were conducting fieldwork for the case studies of the seven Hmong communities. Exemplary projects were brought to their attention by Hmong leaders and community members and Hmong and Americans providing services to the Hmong or otherwise involved in their resettlement. The variety and number of resettlement efforts going on around the country prevent this volume from being an exhaustive compendium of promising resettlement projects and strategies. Rather, the projects described here are examples of interesting, innovative or noteworthy efforts at the specific time the research was being conducted (generally from December 1982 to June 1983). Many other useful efforts have developed since that time.

Similarly, by the time this report is published, the projects included in it may have expanded or evolved or the contact person may have changed.*

This volume was compiled, then, to share the experiences of selected projects with Hmong and Americans across the nation who are addressing similar resettlement issues or problems. It is hoped that Hmong and American service providers, community leaders, employers, business sponsors and individuals, as well as program administrators, policy-makers and planners may all benefit from taking a close look at some of these strategies for successful resettlement and comparing them with their own experiences.

In the pages that follow, projects are grouped by resettlement topic rather than geographic location. To the extent possible, each strategy or project description contains information about the project's objectives, the history of its development and organization, the source of funding, the number of Hmong served or affected by the project, any outcomes and plans for further project work or expansion of the effort, and the name and address of the person to contact for more information.

*For example, the Hmong community of Fort Smith, Arkansas, was selected as a case study because of the unique way that community was formed, and several of the strategies for resettlement used there have been included in this volume. However, at the time this Study was concluding, the situation for the Hmong of Fort Smith was changing dramatically and shortly thereafter the community began to move. Approximately half moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where they obtained much better paying jobs than they had had before; others moved to Wisconsin or to California.

II. Employment

As described in greater detail in Volume 1 of this Final Report, several issues have been identified as serious concerns regarding employment for the Hmong. A major dilemma for many Hmong is determining the degree of English facility necessary for finding a job. A related concern is the amount of job experience or training required. Different philosophies for successful resettlement exist based on the issue of when to look for employment, before or after improving one's skills. Among the community case studies there are many examples of individuals with limited English who have opted to find an entry-level job as quickly as possible, only to realize later that they are not learning English on the job and do not have time or energy to study during non-work hours. In some locations, such individuals have supported themselves for several years. In others where the economy has suffered a set-back, they have found themselves unable to advance on the job, most vulnerable to lay-offs and least likely to be rehired because of increased competition and their lack of English skills.

Another serious concern is how to find a job. Most Hmong lack familiarity with the job market in this country. They also have little experience with job search methods commonly used to get a job here. As pointed out in Volume 1, the vast majority of Hmong who are employed have found their jobs through other Hmong. A related problem is the need to inform employers unfamiliar with the Hmong about the skills and strengths of Hmong employees.

The employment projects and strategies presented below address these concerns. The case of the textile firm in Providence provides an example

of a strategy that not only introduces Hmong employees to an employer who had no experience with the Hmong, but also addresses the problem of lack of English skills by setting up a bilingual supervisor to train and oversee a crew of Hmong workers. The Jobs for New Americans project illustrates the power of presenting information about the Hmong to churches and business associations and tapping their resources and networks to find new sources of jobs. Project RISE in Minnesota represents an effort to provide job development and placement suited specifically for Indochinese refugees, particularly those with limited English proficiency and inappropriate work experience.

Bilingual Supervisor and Second Shift of Hmong Workers.
at Textile Firm (Providence, Rhode Island)

Objective. Many companies are deterred from hiring Hmong refugees because they fear problems in communication due to the refugees' lack of English skills. A company which had never before hired Hmong agreed to hire and train an outstanding Hmong community leader for one month. The bilingual leader would learn how to construct shirts. After a month's training, he would train an additional 10-15 Hmong workers, including many who do not speak English. The additional workers would comprise an entire new shift which the company would add.

Development of the project. A job developer from the Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), the employment agency under contract to the state resettlement program, contacted a textile firm with the concept of hiring a person who would become a bilingual supervisor. The firm was already enthusiastic about refugees. What finally convinced the company to try the idea was the availability of non-ORR on-the-job training (OJT) funds.

Funding. The employment agency, OIC, negotiated with CETA--in the last days of the agency's existence as CETA--for 28 weeks of on-the-job training funds for the Hmong hired by the textile firm. CETA agreed to pay one-half of each worker's salary for the 28-week training period.

Population served. To date, 11 Hmong have been hired, including the supervisor. The pay begins slightly above minimum wage with regular increases.

Outcome. Thus far, both employees and the employer have been satisfied with the arrangement. The key ingredient is the availability of a respected bilingual leader who is willing to play the leading role as trainer-supervisor for a group that does not speak English. This is a stressful role because not only is the leader learning a new set of procedures, but he is also responsible for teaching them to others and then insuring that production meets quota both in terms of quality and quantity. The bilingual Hmong should be compensated for the extra duties this supervisory role involves. This strategy is one of the best ways of employing limited English speaking people.

Plans for future expansion. The firm plans to hire up to 15 Hmong for the second shift of its operations. OIC, the employment agency, is pursuing this concept with other companies. The limiting factor appears to be the acute shortage of skilled bilingual leaders who are available for the stressful role of teaching and supervising non-English speakers in a demanding work situation. However, if these rare individuals can be found, this strategy is well worth it.

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Jobs for New Americans (Providence, Rhode Island)

Objective. How can companies which have never before hired refugees or churches which have not been involved previously with refugees be induced to hire or find jobs for refugees? A special campaign was deemed necessary by the State Refugee Office to go beyond the normal routes of job developers hired by the employment agency under contract to the refugee program.

Development and organization of the project. By chance, the U.S. Catholic Conference came in contact with a young actress named Erica Hagan who had lived for a year in Ban Vinai. When Erica Hagan returned to the states, USCC hired her to tour the country speaking on behalf of refugees in communities with large Southeast Asian populations. Ms. Hagan brought a set of slides and an enthusiastic, convincing manner to her many presentations across the country. She had particular success in schools, addressing some of the racial stereotypes, and before business groups, presenting the advantages of hiring refugees. On the average she spent a week or two in each of the many communities she visited. The State Coordinator in Rhode Island asked her to return for four months, this time under contract, to direct her hiring message to churches and businesses which have had no involvement with Southeast Asians to date.

When Ms. Hagan returned to Rhode Island, she was based at the local affiliate of USCC, Catholic Social Services. To aid her, the State Office of Refugee Resettlement provided her with Hmong, Lao and Cambodian staff persons. Ms. Hagan speaks before breakfast clubs, businessmen's luncheons, professional societies, churches and church associations. She also visits top management at companies that others refer her to. Once a job offer is made, she reports it to the state's employment agency under

contract to the refugee program. This agency in turn finds the most qualified refugee from its registry and sends a job developer to the company to work out the details and see if the company can hire any additional refugee workers.

Funding. Funding for the special jobs coordinator is from the state social services allocation. Funds for the Hmong, Lao and Cambodian staff assistance come from the Special Incentive Grant to Utilize MAAs as Service Providers from the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement.

Outcomes. Ms. Hagan finds about 10 jobs a week, an extraordinary number of new positions in a time of high unemployment. Her dedication has brought added vitality to the state's mainstay employment effort. The longer she remains in the state during this brief assignment, the deeper she mines untapped prospects for jobs and contacts leading to job offers.

Part of her ability to approach churches throughout the state stems from the fact that refugees in Rhode Island are not sponsored by individual churches, but by the affiliates of the voluntary agencies. The congregational model of individual church sponsorship of a refugee family or cluster of families has not been used in Rhode Island. The pool of good will in the church sector has not been exhausted as in other states where church-based sponsorship is the rule rather than the exception.

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Project RISE: Refugees in Search of Employment
(Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota)

Objectives. Project RISE is a job development and placement program designed to serve Indochinese refugees in the seven-county metropolitan area of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Conveniently located in the Midway area of the Twin Cities, the Project has targeted refugees with limited English language and marketable work skills as its primary clientele. A secondary purpose is to train Indochinese staff personnel as professionals in the field of employment services.

Development and organization of the project. Project RISE was initiated by Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis in November 1979. In July of that year state and voluntary agencies had formed the Minnesota Consortium with a view to facilitating better coordination of refugee resettlement services. Essential areas of responsibility were assigned to various voluntary agencies, and Catholic Charities undertook the task of employment services.

The 15 staff members at Project RISE in 1982 (increased by two in 1983) included five Americans and 11 Indochinese, four of whom were Hmong. Both administrative positions, director and intake/referral coordinator, were held by Americans as were the positions of job-seeking skills instructor and two employer relations representatives (ERRs). Eight Indochinese, including three Hmong, were ERRs, and a Vietnamese-American and a Hmong held the positions of secretary and receptionist respectively. A Cambodian is lead ERR and takes responsibility for job development strategies and the training of new ERRs, while also monitoring all fieldwork.

The work of the ERRs and job-seeking skills instructors (now two, with the lead instructor described as employability development trainer) is crucial to the placement of refugees in jobs. If a newly registered client has extremely limited English language skills, he is assigned to an ERR for employment counseling in his own language and if possible he will be placed in a situation where he needs little English and can work with others of his ethnic group, at least one of whom can speak English adequately. These situations are generally arranged through negotiations between the ERRs and employers in the business community with whom Project RISE has established an ongoing cooperative relationship. If, on the other hand, a newly registered client speaks English well enough to seek a job himself with the support and help of Project staff, he may become part of a "job club" under the supervision of job-seeking skills instructors. As well as receiving work orientation and attending intercultural communication workshops, as required of all refugees registered at the Project, members of job clubs also must actively engage in daily job hunting either individually or with a "buddy." They also receive counseling and support from other club members and Project staff. Once placed, a refugee continues to receive help in solving employment problems from Project staff for 90 days or until he no longer needs assistance.

Funding. Under contract with the Minnesota Department of Public Welfare, Project RISE received 85% federal funding for its first year of operation, with the remaining 15% provided by Catholic Charities. At the end of the year Catholic Charities submitted a proposal to the state for an enlarged program which has continued to be administered by that agency and supported by 100% federal funding since fiscal year 1981.

Population served. Since 1981 the agency has provided services to approximately 1,550 Indochinese refugees, about 55% of whom have been Hmong. Around 60% of the refugees served have been referrals from county welfare offices, 20% from voluntary agencies, and about 5% to 10% are walk-ins.

For reasons that are not altogether clear, only a small number of women have sought employment assistance at Project RISE, and virtually all of these are Hmong. Hmong women clients numbered only 95 (out of 563 Hmong served) in the period April 1, 1981, to March 31, 1982. Only 54 (out of 212 Hmong served) sought assistance in the period April 1, 1982, to March 31, 1983. Most Hmong women who registered expressed a desire for a job in which they could use their needlework skills. When these were not available, Project staff attempted to steer them into a broader range of jobs. Recently a house-cleaning training course was initiated by Project RISE, including 9 weeks of training in cleaning and English language, to be followed by 3 weeks of job hunting under Project supervision. This appears to be the only program specifically initiated to train women for employment. At the present time, 12 Hmong women are scheduled to begin training in this course, but the training of Hmong women for house cleaning has been questioned by some resettlement workers because it only leads to low-paid, part-time work at best. Others point to the fact that this is work that offers no possiblity for promotion and provides no benefits.

Outcomes. In 1982 the Project operated on a budget of $399,732, with a staff of 15. The cost of job placement was between $500 and $600 per refugee placed (this may be compared with $400 spent by Lao Family Community and an average cost of $426 by refugee employment programs in

the state). From April 1, 1981, to March 31, 1983, the percentage placed dropped, as unemployment in the state rose to a record 9%. The overall percentage for the 2-year period was about 53%. The percentage of Hmong men placed during the year ending March 31, 1982, was 66%, or the same as that of all Indochinese, whereas the percentage for Hmong women was 73%. During the year ending March 31, 1983, however, only 45% of the Hmong men served were placed in jobs, and the percentage of Hmong women placed was nearly the same at 44%.

While Project RISE has focused on serving refugees with limited English proficiency and work skills--generally viewed as a handicap in job-seeking, the director is strongly convinced that English can be learned on the job more efficiently than in the classroom situation. This view is contradicted by the complaint of many employers of RISE clients, surveyed by the Literacy 85 Project in St. Paul, that the English language skills of refugees employed on the assembly line or other routine jobs often does not improve on the job, and there is a serious barrier to their advancement beyond entry-level positions. Many also cited the need for employees to be able to read and write basic English. Also, employers have complained that the policy of sending non-English speakers to work in a group with one bilingual employee decreases the opportunities for the non-English speakers to improve their speaking skills through practice on the job.

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III. Education and Training

Opportunities for further education and training are among the top priorities mentioned by most Hmong for successful resettlement in this country. The Hmong place a high value on education, for themselves and for their children. Not surprisingly, most Hmong feel their future in this country depends on the education their children receive. Hmong adolescents, in particular, have a special role to play in the successful adaptation of their families to life in the U. S. Many Hmong teenagers have taken on considerable responsibility in helping their parents and elders with the demands of a technological, English-speaking society and in counseling and guiding their younger siblings as they deal with the cross-cultural conflicts inherent in their lives as young Hmong people here. Issues of concern to Hmong youth voiced throughout this Study include: conflicts in cultural expectations; a very high dropout rate resulting from academic difficulties, welfare disincentives and traditional patterns of early marriage and pregnancy; lack of guidance about career planning and higher education; too little vocational training appropriate for Hmong youth; inadequate financial assistance for higher education or training; and insufficient ESL and academic tutoring.

The majority of Hmong adults lack previous education or job skills appropriate for job markets in the United States; to compete for jobs and become self-sufficient, they feel they need practical training geared to their specific needs and directly linked to job placement. In community after community, similar concerns about vocational training and placement were voiced: (1) Hmong have limited access to most standard job training progams because applicants are screened on the basis of their education

and English skills; (2) training often does not lead to a job, either because the training was inappropriate for the current job market or because placement efforts following the training were inadequate; and (3) the training that is available is not appropriate for the educational background of most Hmong or does not take full advantage of existing Hmong skills.

The strategies presented below address these issues. Across the country, student associations have sprung up, not unlike earlier associations of Hmong students in Vientiane and later in Thailand, to provide mutual support for academic problems and educational goals. These associations have been formed by dedicated young Hmong people who are concerned about the futures of their families and their communities. They provide tutoring in math and English for younger students, counseling about academic problems, encouragement for continuing on to higher education, and even workshops for their elders on subjects of interest or concern, such as governmental institutions, practices and policies in the United States, economics or social norms and expectations here.

The vocational training programs described below provide examples of training designed specifically for Southeast Asian refugees. The electronics training program offered by Lao Family Community in Southern California does not screen out applicants because of lack of English. The nurse's training program in Rhode Island addresses the problem that many Southeast Asians have had nursing experience, but lack the appropriate academic credentials to become certified to practice their skills in this country. The sewing project in Minnesota builds on existing Hmong expertise with textiles and needlework to prepare Hmong women for industrial jobs. Although some graduates from these programs

have found jobs, these projects continue to suffer from one of the major concerns of the Hmong regarding available vocational training: the lack of a direct link to job placement. Additional examples of vocational training programs can be found in Volume 2 of the Study's final reports. However, much more could be done to design and provide appropriate training tied to specific jobs for the Hmong.

Hmong College Students Tutoring Hmong
High School Students (Providence, Rhode Island)

Objective. Hmong high school students need extra help in academic subjects and support from older Hmong students who have graduated before them.

Development and organization of the project. Once a week during the school year about 20-40 high school students meet at a local church for three hours of tutoring in English and math. During the summer, the tutoring session meets every day. The tutors, who are Hmong college students, volunteer their time. This idea was instigated by the Hmong, many of whom were members of St. Michael's Parish, a church that has been deeply interested in the Hmong community. The church offered free use of several classrooms.

One of the advantages of having older Hmong as tutors is that they can explain difficult concepts or passages in Hmong, although much of the class is conducted in English. The Hmong college students are older brothers of the boys and girls in the classroom who have mastered high school math and English and then gone on to college. They are living examples to the younger students of perseverance and academic achievement.

This tutoring program is Hmong-run and organized and is independent of the public school system. The role of the Hmong community is also minimal. The word of this program is spread mainly by word of mouth and is centered on the Hmong who attend the church which provides the classrooms.

Funding. No funding is necessary to undertake this idea.

Outcomes. No outcomes are directly attributable to this tutoring program. However, judging by the two consecutive years of its operation, the dedication of its volunteer band of tutors, and the consistency of the students who attend, it is meeting a need of the teenagers for extra help and encouragement in their studies. Indirectly, this program increases the chances that those involved will finish high school and continue into college.

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Rhode Island College Upward Bound Program
(Providence, Rhode Island)

Objective. This is a federally funded program to help minority and economically disadvantaged students to succeed in college. Although the program is not specifically for Hmong or even Southeast Asians, significant numbers of both have benefited from the program in Rhode Island to warrant including it as a significant strategy for helping the Hmong break into college.

Development and organization of the program. For students accepted into Upward Bound while seniors in high school, the program provides special after-hours instruction in reading, writing, study skills,

mathematics, science and other subjects necessary for success in high school; personal counseling; academic advice and assistance in high school course selection to ensure proper direction for programs not usually available to disadvantaged youth; career exploration and education; ESL instruction; and on-campus summer residential programs which provided intensive academic coursework to "simulate" a college in the months before a student formally enters college.

The program pays 100 percent of the tuition, room and board and other expenses of attending a 4-year residential college, plus a $100 per month living stipend. The student has no financial worries during his or her college year.

Three of five target schools selected by the program for recruiting qualified students were high schools attended by the Hmong in Providence. About 20 of the 112 low income, first generation students were Asian. Of this number, four were Hmong. The high schools that participate in the program publicize the attractions of being involved in the Upward Bound Program. Prospective students are tested and interviewed.

Several Hmong leaders have participated in seminars designed to teach the rudiments of Hmong cultural beliefs about education to teachers and counselors involved with the Upward Bound Program. Information about the program is sent to the Mutual Assistance Association (MAA) office. Word of mouth also attracts Hmong applicants. Any student may apply.

Funding. The college or university administering the program applies to the U.S. Department of Education under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Last year 444 Upward Bound Programs were funded.

This year, the Reagan Administration has requested to cut the number of Upward Bound programs from 444 to 175.

Outcomes. All of the Hmong students currently in the Upward Bound Program at Rhode Island College said they would probably have dropped out of college by now without the support and extra help offered by the program.

There is some evidence that parents of Upward Bound students do not understand the extraordinary opportunities the program affords their children. Last year, a Hmong family moved to Merced, California, forcing the withdrawal of a Hmong college student in the Upward Bound Program. As one of his teachers remarked bitterly, "He gave up a four-year scholarship, plus a $100 a month in stipend, to go with his family to pick tomatoes for ten cents an hour."

The Upward Bound Program, although it can accept only a fraction of the Hmong who apply, addresses the questions that Hmong ask most often about college--what should I study; how do I write the term paper; how do I plan my future; how do I make it through college. As one Hmong student in the program said, "Without the special help I got from Upward Bound I never could have written that term paper last year."

Contact person. For more information, contact:

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The Hmong Student Association of Dallas and Fort Worth (Texas)

Objective. This youth organization was formed in 1978 by a Hmong student attending the University of Texas in suburban Arlington. The

original purpose of the group was to bring together the widely scattered young people in the area for social activities and the development of a group identity. Early leaders also hoped that through the youth organization, the larger Hmong community--lacking political unity and dispersed throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth area--could be drawn together and organized for mutual assistance.

While the early social activities of the youth organization were important in developing group cohesion, more recently its leaders have emphasized specifically educational goals. One of the college-student members described the goals this way: "We try hard to help individuals become more dedicated toward their own goals--to help people become more self-motivated. We do this in part by providing good examples or models. What the organization wants is for everyone to graduate from college."

Organization and activities. The organization has no official membership; no fees are charged. The number participating has increased, from 17-18 in 1982 to over 30 now. Of those about 10-11 are women. The average age is around 18 or 19--people finishing high school and starting college, but there are also some younger high school students and some who are older. The organization serves Hmong students in the entire Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex as well as neighboring areas.

The organization has invited several national Hmong leaders to speak to the members about special educational concerns of the Hmong in the United States. College students in the organization have formed classes in English as a Second Language (ESL) for high school students with language problems. They have counseled teenagers making crucial decisions related to school, work, and family. Most important, the

college students have served as models for the high school students, enabling the younger students to gain confidence in their own ability to achieve academically.

A general theme that has been emphasized by both the national leaders and the college students in the Association is the importance for teenagers to break away from the traditional early marriage and postpone marriage until their formal education is complete. National leaders have pointed to the students' responsibility to their families and the larger Hmong community, and the need for well educated leaders. College students have reiterated the same theme and have pointed out that the teenagers have only to look at others in the Hmong community, particularly women with children to see how difficult it is to continue one's education after marriage and the arrival of children.

College students also provide help to high school seniors planning to enroll in college. This ranges from orientation programs and tours of college campuses to assistance with application forms for admission and financial aid. In addition they obtain forms from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to help high school students and their family members apply for permanent residence status.

Some activities of the Association are directed toward maintenance of traditional social and cultural ties. Included for example are trips to Hmong communities in other areas. The Association has taken responsibility for organizing an annual Hmong New Year celebration, held on Thanksgiving Day, that draws together Hmong from the entire Dallas-Fort Worth area, as well as many Lao and American friends. In addition to traditional foods, dances, and music, the Hmong Association's own band provides Hmong rock and traditional Lao music for the

community's entertainment. In 1982 the students wrote and produced an elaborate pageant for the event, depicting life in Laos, the mass departure of the Hmong, and their new life in the United States. About 500 people attended the 1982 New Year Celebration.

Other types of social activities are still part of the Association's program. There have been picnics and contests, as well as occasional parties featuring the students' own rock band. The students have organized two soccer teams which play each other and sometimes go out of state (e.g., to Oklahoma) to play other Hmong teams.

An important feature of the Association is the regular meeting held every three months, during which members discuss their educational, personal, and financial problems. In these sessions members function as a mutual assistance group, offering encouragement and advice, as well as financial help in emergencies. For example, when the mother of one of the members died, Association members provided emotional support and contibuted about $250 for funeral expenses.

Possibly the most important of the Association's special activities is an annual graduation event honoring the year's high school (and college) graduates. Parents and other members of the Hmong community are invited to attend and to join in honoring the graduates, who are each given certificates prepared by the Association in recognition of their achievement. A special academic achievement award is sometimes presented to an outstanding student. In the spring of 1983, awards were given to four secondary students who were in the top 10% of their school classes. Two were eighth and ninth grade students from Dallas; the other two were both high school juniors attending school in Fort Worth.

Funding. There are no membership dues. The organization is financed through contributions from members and sometimes also from their parents. Donations are obtained to pay the costs of individual events. No organizational fund-raising activities have been undertaken because most students have jobs which provide a better way of obtaining money.

Plans are being made to incorporate as a non-profit orgnization so that it will be possible to solicit scholarship funds from foundations and/or businesses for the support of Hmong students with strong academic records. The leaders have joined with others with the idea of planning a national program to provide scholarships for outstanding Hmong students on a national basis

Outcomes. While no contact has been made with public high schools in the area, the Association has worked with the counseling office at UTA, where it has been successful in obtaining both grants and loans for Hmong students.

The Hmong Student Association does not claim all the credit for the good record of Hmong high school and college students in the area, but its leaders point to the fact that virtually all Hmong who have attended high school in the area have graduated, and it can be reasonably assumed that the support and assistance provided to high school students by the Association has been an important factor in their success. The number of students attending college has also increased from three in 1978, the year the Association was organized, to 20 in early 1983, with three more planning to enter college by summer. Ten to twelve more are expected to enroll in college in the fall of 1983. Two additional students are in graduate school.

Contact person. For more information, contact:

Thao Cheng, President
Hmong Student Association
1134 Las Palmas Drive
Grand Prairie, TX 75051

The Lao Students Association (Santa Ana, California)

Objective. The goal of the Lao Students Association (LSA) is to provide educational, youth employment, social adjustment and career opportunities to Hmong youth who lack knowledge or abilities to carry out future goals. The LSA Information Sheet states:

> The objective is to bridge the gap between the Third World people who recently came to this modern and technological society, especially the Laotian youth and community. We hope that the youth emphasis will have spillover effects that should improve assistance to the community as a whole, because the young people can learn and understand the transitions quicker than their parents.

Organization and activities. The Lao Students Association (LSA) was formed in 1979 at California State University, Fullerton, by a group of Hmong college students. It is a volunteer organization of Hmong students doing different kinds of community work who target their assistance to young Hmong, particularly those with educational problems. The philosophy of the group is that young people will soon become responsible for supporting the community, and if they are guided in the right direction, many of the problems currently besetting the Hmong might be relieved in the future.

LSA is registered as a California non-profit organization and has bylaws and regulations. The group was started through private donations, mostly on the part of the members. For now, the functions of the group are run with volunteer labor of the members and membership donations of $2.00 a year.

The significance of LSA as an adjustment strategy is its youth focus, its future orientation, and its sharing of higher education, which up to now has only been available to a privileged few young people. It is Hmong young people trying to help Hmong young people.

LSA works primarily out of the headquarters of the Lao Family Community in Santa Ana. In addition to social activities, some of the successful service activities they have undertaken include:

1. Ongoing tutoring for young people in math and English 3 days a week from 5-7 p.m.

2. Ongoing counseling and referral, and help in translation, for young people.

3. Workshop presentations to adult participants in ESL classes on Friday afternoons about American economic systems, government and social problems. These were presented in Hmong, step-by-step, and presenters feel they were very popular and successful.

4. One LSA committee cooperated with the Orange County schools to help figure out equivalent levels in Laos, so that students who were 18 or 19 automatically placed in the senior class could get credit for some of their previous work and be able to graduate from high school.

Future plans. In the future, LSA would like to help those young people in particular need, especially those who have dropped out of school or have turned 18 and have not yet graduated and are cut off from AFDC and cannot find jobs. LSA would like to be able to help these young people with technical training or job search, since County agencies usually only provide service to heads of households. LSA is run entirely by volunteer labor now and would like to seek public or private grants to help pay for staff time to get these projects underway.

Contact. For more information, contact:

Lao Family Community
1140 South Bristol
Santa Ana, CA 92704
(714) 556-9520

Hmong Fresno County Students Association

Objectives. The objectives of this newly formed association are to promote the social and cultural adjustment of Hmong youth into their new society, to provide assistance and guidance to Hmong high school students regarding academic problems, career planning and training opportunities and to offer support and guidance to Hmong youth to complete high school and to continue with their college education.

Organization and activities. The organization has about 300 members, perhaps 20 of whom come to monthly meetings or meetings called for special purposes. The association is formally organized and provided a copy of its organizational chart. For the 1982-1983 term, there is an elected President (Yee Ly), Vice President (Chue Thao), and two individuals designated as Secretary and two as Treasurer. There are also three standing committees: Society, Education and Music.

Members of the association have primarily been young Hmong men, although there are several young women in the organization as well (including the Vice President). It was reported that few girls have participated to date because relatively few are interested in higher education or training (many have chosen to marry and start a family at a young age rather than completing high school) or are not allowed by their parents to attend unchaperoned meetings. (The youth reported that few of their parents understand the purpose or necessity for such organizations.)

Membership includes primarily high school students wishing to complete high school and/or continue with postsecondary training or education. There are several Hmong college students who participate in

order to encourage others to attend college in the area and to advise them about opportunities for financial assistance. Orientation programs have been run to provide information about admissions, financial aid and registration. Students are frequently bewildered by the college environment, even after successfully adjusting to high school life.

The Students Association also provides an important link between the larger Hmong community and the residents of the Fresno area in general. The students often provide services to their families and to other members of the community, including translation, interpretation, counseling and referrals to service providers. This proved to be particularly important in Fresno during the first few years of the rapid growth of the Hmong community here, during which time the schools and health and social service agencies were not prepared to deal with the sudden appearance of large numbers of Hmong clientele.

The Hmong Fresno County Students Association has also been active in providing for some of the social and cultural needs of Hmong high school students. Each year they organize a special party for the graduating Hmong seniors, in which their families, friends and other Hmong youth join and celebrate. The Music Committee also provides a mixture of both traditional Hmong and Lao music as well as contemporary rock and roll for a variety of social and cultural events that take place throughout the year in the Hmong community.

Future plans. Like the larger Hmong community of Fresno, the Hmong Fresno County Students Association is a new and rapidly developing organization. Its members would like to see the organization continue to expand as more local high school students express interest in completing

high school and going on for further training or education. They would like to sponsor events to raise money for a Hmong scholarship fund, to work more closely with school counselors and teachers to improve the tutoring and guidance services available to Hmong youth, and to broaden their service activities to help younger and older members of their community as well.

Contact person. For more information, contact:

Yee Ly, President
Hmong Fresno County Students Association
1260 N. Mariposa
Fresno, CA 93701

Job Training for Refugees with Limited Education--
Lao Family Vocational Training Center (Santa Ana, California)

Objective. One of the problems for Hmong gaining access to job training in Orange County has been that they could not qualify for most programs which required more English and literacy skills than they had. In response to the need for more appropriate and accessible training, the Lao Family Vocational Training Center was set up in December 1978.

Development and organization. The Vocational Training Center was designed to meet the special needs of Hmong trainees, although other refugee groups participate as well. At first, training in furniture and upholstery making was offered. In October 1981, the Center changed its focus and began to offer electronics assembly training instead. While Lao Family had an ESL program, there was a basic English requirement for entry into the training program. Since 1982, however, when the ESL program was discontinued, there has been no English requirement for participation in the job training offered. In addition, the Center tries to keep paperwork at a minimum for the trainees.

There are two levels in the electronics training program. Trainers say that 12 weeks is a good training time for the Hmong in this program, and 8 weeks for those with more education. Trainees go to the program 3 hours a day, 5 days a week. Level 1 consists of learning color codes and terminology. Level 2 is practice in stuffing and soldering.

Trainers are particularly sensitive to the training needs of the Hmong. They use a lot of repetition and go slowly. Classes are mixed ethnically as a matter of policy to encourage socilaization. There are no bilingual trainers in the classes, which are conducted entirely in English. Although training is not bilingual, this strategy is particularly significant. It is given in a bilingual setting, so language obstacles to gaining access to the program are removed, and daily problems which often make it difficult for trainees to participate or learn can be dealt with by bilinguals working in the setting. Students learn the basic vocabulary of a work setting and the specific vocabulary of electronics assembly. Although the program is not designed as an English class, the concrete, work-oriented approach is exactly the teaching approach so many Hmong have asked for in ESL.

Funding. The Vocational Training Center is funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement through the State of California at an approximate cost of $200,000 a year.

Population served. About 250 trainees go through the program in a year. Approximately 60% are age 16-36, 30% 37-54 and 10% over 55. At first, the program had more women than men, but more men came in 1982 due to more pressure for men to work. Confidence in the program has grown considerably. Now there is a long waiting list to enter.

Outcome. Trainers note that although the Hmong trainees excel, few subsequently find work. If they do not find work after training, the trainers believe they will not lose their skills (unless they have to wait over a year), but they do tend to lose motivation to look for work.

Contact. For more information, contact:

Lao Family Community
1140 South Bristol
Santa Ana, CA 92704
(714) 556-9520

Special Training Program for Southeast Asians in Nursing (Cranston, Rhode Island)

Objective. In Rhode Island, no Southeast Asians with nursing experience have an associate degree in nursing which would qualify them to be hired by a health care facility. Consequently, no Southeast Asians are working as care providers in any neighborhood health clinic or hospital. Without health care staff who speak any of the Southeast Asian languages, appropriate health care cannot be provided. Translators are no substitute for Southeast Asians on staff as qualified nurses and other professional staff. To alleviate this shortage, a modest training program was begun jointly by staff from the State Office of Refugee Resettlement and the Community College of Rhode Island.

Development and organization of the program. Thirty Southeast Asians with previous training in nursing or allied health were recruited and tested by the College for English and math skills. Based on these results, 15 candidates had potential for college level work. In the summer of 1982, 12 students began special English classes. Because the majority had not achieved high school graduation or were unable to

provide equivalency, the students were tutored in preparation for their GED exam. At the end of the summer, half of the group received their GED. The remaining students were allowed to enter the College but will need to complete their GED before finishing the nursing program.

Ten of the twelve students selected nursing and were accepted into the regular Associates' degree nursing program and began classes on August 30, 1982. One of the ten students is Hmong; the others are Lao and Cambodian.

Currently, the Southeast Asian nursing students are enrolled in four courses: Nursing I; Anatomy; General Psychology; and Composition I for ESL speakers. An evaluation of the first semester's work indicated that more concentration on English and study skills was needed as well as more faculty time for difficult areas of instruction.

The course of instruction is three years and leads to an R.N. degree, at which time the Southeast Asian candidates will be in a position to pass the nursing boards. Hospitals in Rhode Island have stated they will hire the nurses and medical lab technicians once they have completed their training and passed their qualifying exams.

Funding. A 1-year CETA grant of $10,871 was received by the Community College to partially subsidize the salary of the nursing instructor for the 1982-83 academic year. In addition, CETA awards a stipend of $3.10 per hour of attendance in class or laboratory for the CETA eligible Southeast Asian nursing students. Eight of 10 students were eligible in the fall of 1982 for these stipends. Because all of the students have families, the stipend is essential for them to participate in the program.

A second grant of $10,000 was received from the Rhode Island Department of Education to provide a part-time bilingual, bicultural counselor and part-time interpreters and tutors.

Outcome. Based on the first year of experience, the project director has proposed to add an extra year of instruction to the usual 2-year Associate's program in order to teach at a pace tailored to the needs of the students. It is hoped that by restructuring the traditional curriculum that fewer students will drop out because of academic reasons.

Contact person. For more information, contact:

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R.I. Office of Refugee Resettlement
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Cranston, RI
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or

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Dean of Nursing and Allied Health
Community College of Rhode Island
Lincoln, RI 02865
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Project Regina: A Sewing Program for Hmong Women (Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota)

Objective. Project Regina is one of several programs in the St. Paul-Minneapolis metropolitan area with the objective of utilizing the needlework proficiency of Hmong women to develop employment skills. The Regina program differs from other such programs locally in several important respects. First, it is a 5-day-per-week program, while most meet once or twice a week. Second, it includes training in the use of industrial as well as home sewing machines, whereas most other programs

provide training on home sewing machines only, despite the fact that they are funded as employment training. Third, instruction in English and house cleaning forms an integral part of the Regina program and is attended by all the women enrolled. Most important, perhaps, is the fact that both the industrial and home sewing machines are available to women enrolled in the program for after hours and Saturday use for piece work on commission from local businesses, providing a means of earning income.

Development and organization. Like many other sewing programs for Hmong women in St. Paul and Minneapolis, the Regina Project is an outgrowth of a sewing class for low-income women sponsored by local community education programs (others have been sponsored by public housing authorities). Located at Regina High School in a working class neighborhood in South Minneapolis, the community education program limited women to one class per week. During the spring of 1981 Indochinese refugee women attending English classes at nearby Windom School learned about the sewing classes through flyers distributed at the school by Dominican Sister Marie Lee, administrator of community education programs at Regina High School. Indochinese women began to sign up for the sewing classes, and Hmong women, in particular, enrolled in large numbers. While American teachers and Hmong women had difficulty communicating, the teachers were amazed by the women's eagerness and proficiency, and the fact that they usually arrived an hour before the class began, bringing relatives along to sign up as well.

In early 1982, the Hmong women asked the president of the Hmong Catholic Community of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis to

serve as their spokesperson in requesting that the sewing classes meet every day. Sister Marie Lee responded to this request by embarking upon a quest for funding to support a program geared to the needs of Hmong women. On the advice of Catholic Charities staff she decided to shift the emphasis of the class from home sewing to job training. She was successful in obtaining donations of both industrial and home sewing machines from local companies and also received large amounts of fabrics for student use from the Munsingwear Company in Minneapolis, which later donated machines as well when it went out of business last year. Although she was unable to obtain funding for teachers' salaries in time to enlarge the program for the spring term of 1982, a trial run was organized for the last six weeks of the term with a volunteer teacher and many overtime hours donated by Sister Marie.

The present program includes two 18-week programs enrolling 40 students per semester, beginning in September and ending in May. Two groups of 20 women each attend 1 hour of English and 2 hours of sewing instruction from Tuesday through Friday. On Mondays, all students attend 2 hours of instruction in house cleaning skills, until the last 6 weeks of the semester when practice in private homes and the nearby convent require that women attend for 4 hours each Monday. All instruction is employment oriented, including English classes, but the women also have the opportunity to sew clothing for their families in the course of learning how to use sewing machines. To complete the sewing course the women must demonstrate their proficiency in 73 different skills and make 17 garments. The program is certified by the Minneapolis Institute of Technology.

Funding. By the fall of 1982, funding had been solicited from 14 local banks, foundations, and religious and educational organizations, and the five-day-per-week program--open to all adults but attended mainly by Hmong women--began operation on a budget of $21,000, which covered teachers' and interpreters' salaries, Sister Marie's salary, equipment and materials.

Population served. Although neither transportation nor child care is provided by the Project, the program has drawn women from all over the metropolitan area, serves 40 women per term, and has 100 names on the waiting list. The popularity of Project Regina, despite the lack of child care and transportation, raises the question as to which women are able to take advantage of the opportunities offered. A poll of women in the English classes indicated that most of the women have preschool as well as school age children, and that most leave them with relatives or unemployed husbands during class hours. Many of those who come from St. Paul have formed car pools, while others take buses from as far away as North Minneapolis. This may indicate that the women enrolled in Project Regina are a self-selected group of women with more relatives to turn to and more resources than other groups of Hmong women have.

Outcomes. During 1982 the Minneapolis Institute of Technology referred several local companies to Project Regina for piecework. The pay was very low, but by working quickly the Hmong women were able to make slightly more than minimum wage for each hour of work. While Sister Marie initially had some reservations about whether the women were creating a sweat shop situation for themselves, she responded to their

need to provide supplementary income for their families and opened the building for after-hours use until 8:00 p.m. on weekdays, and from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays. The women are completely self-sufficient during these after-work hours and have formed "work clusters" with leaders that take responsibility for cleaning up and closing.

With 9% unemployment in Minnesota, Hmong women are finding it difficult to obtain employment even with a certificate from Project Regina. Of the 40 graduates in December 1982, four got full-time jobs (sewing) in industry, while six found part-time house cleaning positions. Those with sewing machines at home have been able to continue to do piece work on items that do not require industrial machines, and this provides them with important supplementary income for their families.

Contact person. For more information, contact:

Sister Marie Lee
Regina High School
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Minneapolis, MN 55409

IV. Income-supplementing and Miscellaneous Economic Strategies

The Hmong have long been known as independent, resourceful, self-sufficient people. In their new lives in the United States, they continue to exercise their resourcefulness, although often under the weighty constraints of an unfamiliar environment. Many Hmong show particular interest in setting up their own businesses or farms. Such endeavors for economic development have been the subject of 8 months of research as part of this Hmong Resettlement Study; the results are presented in detail in Volume 2 of this Final Report. Most Hmong are interested in at least supplementing their incomes by maintaining family gardens. Some want to participate in cottage industries. Others want assistance in managing their money and establishing credit. Strategies to assist the Hmong in these types of efforts are presented below.

Although the Hmong often lack the capital necessary to establish large farms, the training and knowledge of sophisticated farming techniques used in this country, and the knowledge of marketing strategies typical of large-scale farm production, they can and very often do find ways to set up family garden plots or small truck garden cooperatives. In these gardens they apply their considerable expertise in raising food. They reap not only food for their families' tables, thus supplementing meager incomes, but also satisfaction from exercising familiar skills and contributing to the well-being of their families. Four community cooperative garden projects are described here. Some include small animal husbandry. A fifth project has the ultimate goal of building a Hmong village on property purchased jointly. At the time of

this Study, the property was being used for family gardens. Individuals from this same community (Fort Smith, Arkansas) also leased land for raising cattle for the community's consumption and to sell to other refugees in the area.

Other economic strategies described below include a Hmong credit union to address the problem of Hmong not being accustomed to using banks and of not being able to obtain loans; a rather unique collaborative effort between a Hmong mutual assistance association and a group of graduate students from the Yale School of Organization and Management who provided technical assistance and counseling about specific types of business ventures which interest the Hmong; and a cooperative to market Hmong pa ndau.

Indochinese Gardening Project (Providence, Rhode Island)

Objective. The Hmong in Providence live in urban neighborhoods, with little if any backyard space suitable for growing vegetables. Leaders of the Hmong-Lao Unity Association (a mutual assistance association) searched for garden acreage within commuting distance for a large-scale gardening effort.

Development and organization of the project. The mutual assistance association (MAA) leased 7 acres of an undeveloped state park about 5 miles from their neighborhood. The MAA won the approval of the State Properties Committee for a 3-year lease at $1 a year. Assistance in finding the site and negotiating the lease was provided by the State Office of Refugee Resettlement. (Estimated staff time was 2 person weeks over a 6-month period.)

The MAA negotiated a $6,000 contract with the State Office of Refugee Resettlement for funds to operate the garden. With the contract in hand, the MAA hired a local farmer to plow the land. All Indochinese ethnic groups were invited to participate. The land was measured and divided into equal family plots. The Hmong organized themselves by clan; each clan leader drew lots to pick his portion of the garden. It was then the responsibility of the clan leader to subdivide the land assigned to him by the number of families who had previously registered with the MAA for garden plots. Regardless of size, each family received the same amount of land. The Hmong preferred this method because clan members could take care of each others' gardens in the event that one of them couldn't make it to the farm on any given weekend.

The City of Cranston generously donated the services of a water truck to haul water to the garden site once a week . The MAA purchased dozens of 55 gallon drums to store the water. Fortunately, the site also includes a stream and a marsh which provides a source of water.

With funds from the contract, the MAA hired a half-time garden coordinator who kept people informed about the rules for gardening, e.g., no hunting songbirds, take your trash home, lock the gate after you leave, use the metal outhouse, watch out for the poison ivy, etc.

Population served. Three hundred thirteen families had garden plots.

Outcomes. There were numerous indicators of the success of this project:

a) The MAA estimates that each of the participating families saved at least $10 a week in grocery bills. Most families picked produce for 10 weeks. These families netted a savings of $100 plus satisfaction of getting out of the city. If each of the 313 families produced $100 worth of vegetables, the entire garden project resulted in a savings of $31,300 for the participants, not counting the cost of traveling to the garden site.

b) Ten families bought freezers to preserve vegetables for the winter.

c) A number of families participated in a canning and food preservation course offered by the local extension service.

d) The garden generated much favorable publicity for the Hmong. Articles appeared in the major city daily. Scenes from the garden opened a 4-minute feature report on the Hmong in Providence which was shown on the August 22, 1982, edition of the nationally broadcast NBC Nightly News.

e) By administering a large-scale farming project involving 300 families and managing a state contract, the MAA early in its development proved to the Hmong community that it was a viable organization and proved to skeptics in the state that the MAA was capable of handling money.

Plans for expansion. The State Department of Environmental Management, which owns the undeveloped state park land, doubled the amount of land available to the Hmong for the summer of 1983 and subsequent years.

As a partial consequence of the success of the Hmong farming operation, other individuals and organizations have offered land free to the Hmong MAA. A shipyard owner offered to plow and harrow 5 acres of land for them. The Providence City Parks Department offered part of the city's largest park as garden space. The local utility, Naraganesette Electric, offered garden space to Indochinese and others for gardening.

With all of these offers, a Hmong family living in Rhode Island--the second most densely populated state in the country--may have as much gardening space as they can cultivate.

Contact. For more information, contact:

Hmong-Lao Unity Association
155 Niagra Street
Providence, RI
(401) 461-7940

Hmong Community Garden Cooperative (Minneapolis, Minnesota)

Objective. The Hmong Community Garden Cooperative is the third stage in the development of a gardening project for Hmong in Minneapolis sponsored by Pillsbury-Waite. Through the Waite House office, the staff of Pillsbury-Waite became aware of the interest in and need for space for gardens felt by the Hmong in the neighborhood. Each year since, the project has been expanded and transformed to meet changing needs and resources. The purpose of the cooperative is to provide a way for the Hmong users of the land to continue the operation of their gardens over the years without help from the outside.

Development and funding of the project. In May of 1981, Pillsbury-Waite agreed to help organize a garden project for the people living in a neighborhood where many Hmong reside. While any resident is eligible to join, the project has effectively been a Hmong project from the start. In the first year the project was organized as a demonstration project. Pillsbury-Waite agreed to allow some land at their summer camp to be used. Later a private donor made available over 100 acres of land in Eagan. Pillsbury-Waite contributed their staff time to pull the project together with the help of a Hmong volunteer and established a relationship with the CETA Summer Youth Employment Program. They arranged to have several Hmong teenagers hired to help with the gardening, make improvements on the land in Eagan and work on maintenance at the summer camp. CETA also provided bus transportation for the young people to go to work at these sites and for the Hmong families to go to their gardens. Pillsbury-Waite had to pay for the plowing of the land, but this money was recovered from the sale of a

soybean crop grown on one section of the land. The land in Eagan was donated to be used without charge, until the owner decides that he wants to do something else with it. During the first year 40 families were involved, growing vegetables for their own consumption.

The project was expanded in the summer of 1982. The Minneapolis Foundation provided a grant of $1900 to pay a stipend to a Hmong coordinator and to pay for fertilizer and transportation. Pillsbury-Waite continued to contribute staff time. They were able again to use the donated land in Eagan. Four hundred families applied for plots; of those, 250 were accepted. People grew vegetables for their own use, and a booth at the Minneapolis Farmer's Market was rented where families could sell some of their produce. The coordinator also arranged with a pickle company to grow cucumbers. About 20 families grew cucumbers and sold the crop for $5000. Seeds were made available through donations from Northrup King and the Self Reliance Center; other seeds were provided by the Hmong families.

Organization of the cooperative. In the spring of 1983 a new Hmong coordinator, hired by Pillsbury-Waite with funds obtained from the Minneapolis Community Action Agency, began organizing the Hmong Community Garden Cooperative. The summer of 1983 is the last year Pillsbury-Waite will be directly involved with the project. The same land in Eagan is being used, but since it could become unavailable at any time the main function of the cooperative will be to find new land for the members when it becomes necessary. The cooperative is non-profit. The incorporation papers will be finished in early June. The legal work is being done by the lawyer employed by Pillsbury-Waite. The fee is paid from the Minneapolis Community Development Grant. The cooperative is to be

governed by an elected board of officers, the director, and the membership. A meeting was recently held at which the first board of officers was elected. The coordinator is planning to send the officers of the co-op to a workshop on how to run a co-op. It is felt that some training is necessary before the co-op can become self-supporting.

Because the co-op is non-profit the goal of the families involved is to grow food for their own consumption and possibly sell small amounts. One activity of the co-op will be to seek donations of seed from local seed companies. A donation was sought from Northrup King in the spring of 1983, but Northrup King said that the request was too large and their deadline passed before the coordinator could submit a new request.

There are 60 acres presently under cultivation. This is the same amount as in 1982, but each family has more land, because the coordinator concluded that the families did not have enough land last year. Water for the gardens can be obtained from a lake on the property, but the families must carry it. The coordinator hopes to find a pump to help irrigate. This year the families are buying their own seed and fertilizer and providing their own transportation to the site, about 10 miles from the neighborhood where most of the families live.

Population served. In the first year 40 families had garden plots. The second year plots were provided for 250 families. In the summer of 1983 the Cooperative has been organized with larger plots for each family and membership has been restricted accordingly to just 100 families. To become a member a family head must sign up on an intake form and a membership form and pay a $10 fee for plowing. Many more people wanted to join than the co-op could accommodate. Currently there is a long

waiting list, and the coordinator is looking for more land and exploring with Lao Family Community whether some of the people on the co-op waiting list could join the University Extension project.

Outcomes. The coordinator is optimistic about the future of the cooperative. He sees it not only as a way to provide land for gardening for his people, but also as a way to train Hmong to solve problems for themselves and thus take one more step toward self-sufficiency. The Pillsbury-Waite garden project has been a success so far. It has provided an opportunity for a large number of Hmong families to supplement their income by growing vegetables, at a relatively low cost to the organizers. Whether or not the new co-op will become self-sufficient remains to be seen, but it is already clearly a success in reaching its limited goals.

Associated activities. The coordinator of the garden co-op is also in charge of the Indochinese Refugee Program of Pillsbury-Waite. Their other activities include teaching ESL, Hmong literacy, and basic math, and doing youth and family counseling, as well as continuing to develop new ideas to help the Hmong.

Plans for expansion. With the help of staff of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs and the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota and Common Space, the co-op coordinator is presently working on two ideas: the development of a housing cooperative and a rabbit farm.

The housing cooperative would be located in Minneapolis using a rehabilitated building purchased with a grant. A survey conducted showed a great deal of interest in such a cooperative. Currently it is in the

initial stages of study. It is felt that there are many obstacles to overcome, both practical and political, before such a venture could become a reality.

The rabbit farm is an idea which might provide a good source of meat protein for the Hmong at low cost and possibly provide an income from selling the rabbits. The coordinator feels that about $25,000 would be needed to establish the farm. This project, too, is still in the early stages of study.

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Wilder Forest Community Farm and Garden Project (Marine-on-St. Croix, Minnesota)

Objectives. The purpose of the project is to initiate a small-scale community agricultural enterprise designed to supplement food supplies of participating families and ultimately supplement family incomes through marketing of farm and garden products. The project is also designed to provide resources for human relations training and cultural education within Wilder Forest's larger camp and environmental education program.

Development and organization of the project. The Wilder Forest Community Farm and Garden Project was developed in the spring of 1983 by Wilder Forest, a year-round camp and educational center of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, in cooperation with Lao Family Community of St. Paul. Wilder Forest is a 980-acre outdoor education center located 30 miles from downtown St. Paul. Its programs include day camps, resident camp programs, environmental education activities, work camp programs, workshops, and conferences for persons of quite varied age range and

background. Over the past year a number of Hmong families from St. Paul have become familiar with Wilder Forest as participants in various programs. Thirty-two youth participated in 2-week summer work camps in 1982, working alongside Black, Indian, and White young people of varied neighborhood and economic backgrounds. Approximately 30 Hmong families cultivated gardens at the camp during the summer and early fall of 1982, often combining their garden work with family picnics and outings, fishing, snail hunting, hiking, and other outdoor activities.

An important resource at Wilder Forest is a fully operating educational farm, including approximately 55 acres under cultivation, seven new farm buildings, and a year-round farm operation staff. The present farm operation includes both poultry and livestock production, crop agriculture, and vegetable gardening.

Hmong participation in the Community Farm and Garden Project will include gardening and raising poultry and pork for meat. The project's gardening has been under way since early May. Approximately 4 acres of farm land was prepared for planting by Wilder staff, including a Hmong farm manager employed by Wilder Forest. He and other Hmong leaders made the decision to divide the 4 acres available into 44 plots of about 4,000 square feet each for the 44 participating Hmong families, and to find land elsewhere for the 30 additional families who signed up for gardening at Wilder Forest. The farm manager and Wilder staff are responsible for the application of fertilizers and initial weed control as required and will also provide water at the garden site. Hand tools and labor are provided by participating families, and nearby picnic sites are available for their use during their visits at the camp.

Funding. The total start-up cost for the period April 15 to December 15, 1983 is budgeted at $15,670 and is funded by the Saint Paul Foundation. The Amherst H. Wilder Foundation is providing the site and the assistance of permanent staff at Wilder Forest.

Population served. Forty-four Hmong families were selected by Lao Family Community to participate in the project. Thirty additional families are awaiting assignment to garden plots elsewhere.

Outcomes. Most families have been planting and caring for their plots on Saturdays and Sundays, usually spending the entire day at Wilder Forest and including fishing and picnicking in their activities.

The chicken production program is also under way, with the Hmong manager and several others spending most weekdays constructing a chicken yard and 10-foot moveable huts to house the chickens during the summer. Three hundred chickens have been purchased and will be moved into the chicken yard when temporary housing is completed. Work on permanent housing for the animals is scheduled to begin July 1. Ten feeder pigs will be purchased when this is ready, and three breed sows will be added in December. In the fall of 1983, one or two Hmong families will take over the care of the animals and will help to support themselves through the sale of chickens and pigs. Wilder Forest will provide the feed for the animals and building materials for construction of housing for the pigs and chickens.

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RAIN Mien Community Gardens and Small Farming Projects (Portland, Oregon)

Although these agricultural projects are not specifically focused on the Hmong, they are included here because they are designed to teach Southeast Asian refugees farming techniques based on the use of "appropriate technology." RAIN, a Portland, Oregon, based non-profit institution, publishes the Journal of Appropriate Technology. Presently it is conducting a Community Gardens Project and a Small Farming Project with Mien refugees residing in Portland. The Community Gardens Project is similar to other urban gardening projects designed to produce supplementary food for refugees. The Small Farming Project currently being developed is also similar to other cash crop projects around the country, but with one interesting difference.

The Small Farming Project is designed to teach farming skills to six Mien families with a long range goal for the families to become self-sufficient farmers. Since RAIN has extensive information on the use of appropriate technology in agriculture, the project will stress the use of technologies that the Mien (or other groups, such as the Hmong) could easily assimilate. The RAIN staff working on the project have experience in Third World agricultural development projects in Africa and are using some of the same approaches that have proven successful in developing nations. This project has been designed to avoid relying on capital intensive, high technology agricultural models.

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Group Purchase of Land for a Housing Project (Fort Smith, Arkansas)

Objective. Soon after moving from California to Fort Smith, Arkansas, in 1982, 13 of the 17 Hmong families in Fort Smith at the time decided to purchase jointly a parcel of rural land. They planned to build a Hmong village, complete with a church. The two criteria they used in searching for the land were (a) a good site for building homes, and (b) good soil and fairly level land for farming.

Development and organization of the project. Once a suitable site was found, two men negotiated with the real estate agents. The title was put in the name of one of the men. The land was divided equally among the 13 families. As one of the organizers explained, "We chose lots. We prayed to God to please lead us to a happy solution. Then everyone drew lots. By a miracle, everyone got the lot they wanted."

The land is 12 miles from where the Hmong live in Fort Smith. After the land was purchased, the Hmong began to clear it. In the beginning, it was a "jungle," as the Hmong described it. There were trees up to 43 feet thick, hung with vines. On weekends, people cut trees and burned brush. In the summer of 1982, the families planted gardens on their plots.

Funding. The terms of the purchase were $3,200 down payment and a $424.88 monthly payment at 10% interest for 8 years. The owner financed it. The total price was $38,400 ($2,950 per acre). Each of the 13 families had to pay a portion of the down payment--less than $300 per family. This was possible because most had received a sum of money when they left their previous jobs to move to Fort Smith, from insurance contributions, etc. Each family also pays its share of the mortgage

payments, amounting to $33 a month per family. "Many of us borrowed from our friends to put the down payment. Others in the community were happy to lend to us," said one of the organizers.

The families who had lots also paid to have a road put in from the main highway. The road cost $2,600, which was divided among the 13 participating families--$200 each.

Plans. Now the families are thinking about houses. The main point of the discussion seems to be whether the lot owners should buy mobile homes (estimated to cost about $6,000) or build houses. In Fort Smith itself there is an abandoned housing project, the Martin Luther King Housing Project; dozens of one- and two-story brick apartment buildings stand empty. The windows are broken and the doors gone. The city has sold it to a private individual. Some of the Hmong leaders think about buying a few of the old buildings, tearing them down and using the material to build part of their Hmong village.

In the spring of 1983, the Hmong were still spending their Saturdays clearing the land. They were planning to have garden plots in the summer, as they did the year before. Everyone spoke of how important the church was. It will be one of the first buildings to go up.

The ideas of a Hmong village gives the community hope that eventually they will have a place of their own. The purchase of this large parcel of land is a remarkable achievement when the majority of the community are working at minimum wage jobs.

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Leasing 78 Acres of Land for Cattle (Fort Smith, Arkansas)
(From an interview with Chang Xiong)

After we bought two cows from an American neighbor, we thought we should raise our own. I began contacting local real estate agents. Eventually, I met an agent who had land she wanted to lease--an ex-dairy farm not far from the land the Hmong had already purchased for our village. At a community meeting ten families agreed to participate in leasing the 78 acres of land. A 1-year renewable lease cost $700, which came to $70 for each family. The money to purchase cattle was contributed by a woman who had received several years of back payments of SSI in a lump sum. She agreed to invest $6,000 in the enterprise, at no interest, to be repaid eventually by the others members of the group. The Hmong began visiting the livestock dealers and watching the auctions. With the $6,000 we were able to purchase 20 cattle.

We decided we would butcher some of the animals for ourselves and sell others. Vietnamese and Lao people come out to the farm when they want fresh meat. They look at our cattle. "I like this one," they say. We shoot the cow for them and they butcher it on the spot. They bring their own knives and bags and take it all home. The Southeast Asians love every piece of the cow. They prefer the fresh taste of cattle they slaughter themselves rather than what you buy in the store.

During the summer the cattle eat grass. In the winter we have to buy hay, but that's only for 3 months because the climate is warm here. We sold all of the first 20 cattle we bought and raised. Then we bought 18 more. We don't make a big profit but we Hmong like to know that we have cattle whenever we need them. Even though we are poor by American

standards, it makes us feel secure to have a farm like this. Hmong like to walk around the farm. In the spring, we can pick wild bamboo to eat. The young men like to shoot squirrels.

When one of us needs meat, we ask several families to join us. Then we buy one of our own cattle and divide it among the families who want a piece. The $6,000 that bought the original cattle goes around and around. We don't believe in charging our own people interest. Nobody would even think of that. We can't make money off each other especially when we need each other so much. Does a father charge his younger brother for the rice they eat at the same table? No. In Fort Smith we're all sitting at the same table.

A Hmong Credit Union (Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota)

Objectives. In the summer of 1982 a Minnesota Hmong leader, Lo Vang, came up with the idea of organizing a credit union to serve the Hmong community in the Twin Cities. Vang was the first Hmong to graduate from the University of Minnesota and is now enrolled in law school part-time. He saw the need for a cooperative association where Hmong could save and get loans easily and at low interest rates. He sought the help of lawyers at St. Paul Legal Aid in establishing a Hmong-controlled credit union.

The purpose of the credit union is to provide financial services for the Hmong community and to provide a place where Hmong might more easily obtain loans for both personal and commercial purposes. The credit union is seen as a necessary part of the community development for the Hmong community. It is hoped that the credit union will replace the system of money lending and capital accumulation between relatives and groups currently used by the Hmong. It will also encourage the use of financial

institutions rather than keeping cash around the house. It will be easier to obtain a loan than at a bank. Currently, according to Vang, only working people use banks, but he feels that as the credit union is organized people will come forward and join when they realize it is safe. To be successful, the organizer must minimize the risks to depositors.

Development and organization. The credit union has been in the planning stages for about 6 months. The people working on the plans, including a CPA and a third-year law student, are all volunteers. Because the Hmong make little use of banks, the planning committee did a quick survey to find out if members of the Hmong community were interested in joining a credit union. They sent out 600 forms; 200 were returned with 90% expressing an interest in the credit union.

The planning group recently met with a representative from the National Credit Union Association on how to become approved. Because they have a clear constituency--one of association--and there is high interest in the community, approval should come easily. The volunteer CPA is contacting major banks to find an underwriter for the credit union. The credit union will need a bank to handle the accounts, a service for which a fee is charged.

It is hoped that the credit union will open in September 1983. The organizers are discussing writing a proposal to local foundations and/or ORR to provide start-up money to pay for the staff and space for the first year. It is estimated they will need about $50,000 in outside support. This would pay a Hmong staff and an experienced American banker to train them. For this they have talked to the St. Paul Foundation, the

Minneapolis Foundation and the St. Paul Mayor's Office. They are also seeking an arrangement with a Minneapolis credit union which has tentatively offered volunteer time to train the staff.

The Lao Family Community board has endorsed the credit union, but the credit union is intended to operate independently of LFC. The biggest problem in planning the credit union is determining the degree of commitment in the Hmong community and finding out if there is enough money available in the community to accumulate the assets necessary to become a viable operation. Vang points out that no one knows how much money Hmong people have. Success of the credit union depends on strong commitment and willingness to change their way of handling money on the part of the Hmong community.

Plans for the future. The goal for the first year is to seek membership and accumulate enough in assets to be able to lend money in the second year. Also, the staff will be trained during the first year.

The credit union will be governed by a board of directors. Vang hopes to be President. There will also be a credit committee and a supervisory committee. Vang is currently looking for members for the committees. He is also looking for two Hmong coordinators. Credit union members will be recruited from throughout the community, as individuals and Hmong businesses. An attempt will be made to have all the major groups represented on the board to give the organization some balance. As the credit union becomes established, it is planned to be regional, with offices in Hmong communities throughout the Midwest.

Mr. Vang feels that the credit union is close to becoming a reality. The next steps to be taken include:

1. Appoint a board and operating committees
2. Obtain approval of the Credit Union Association, expected in June
3. Do a second marketing survey to get further commitment from the community
4. Obtain start-up money through grants
5. Complete the legal work and get insurance
6. Accumulate assets

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Technical Assistance to Hmong MAA for Establishing Businesses (Providence, Rhode Island)

Objective. The Mutual Assistance Association (MAA) in Providence needs help from Americans knowledgeable about business to plan, research and write feasibility plans for various Hmong owned and operated businesses.

A Yale School of Organization and Management student met the Rhode Island State Coordinator and offered the assistance of 18 graduate students.

Development and organization of the project. In the fall of 1982, three student leaders from Yale met five times with Hmong leaders and the MAA Board of Directors in Providence to propose a working relationship. The Hmong were interested and skeptical. The Yale leaders asked the Hmong to determine what kinds of businesses interested them. The Hmong leaders replied that was part of the problem--they didn't know the range of possibilities and their chances for success or failure. In the meantime, the Yale group invited a number of knowledgeable Americans and Hmong to New Haven to prepare the class for working as business consultants to the Hmong.

By January 1983, the Hmong leaders who were involved with the project chose four areas of interest for the Yale students to assist and/or teach them about. The business projects developed out of a series of planning meetings held between the Hmong and the organizers of the Yale students in which they examined the pros and cons of many potential businesses. The four areas included feasibility studies of: a pig and poultry butcher store, a lobster pot manufacturing firm, a Hmong scholarship foundation, and training sessions on specific aspects of business and management, including types of business, marketing, insurance, licenses and contracts.

In the subsequent 2 months the Yale consultants and interested members of the Hmong community met on a weekly basis to undertake the necessary research for understanding to what extent these business ideas were relevant to the Hmong. On Sundays, a teaching session was held, open to all members of the Hmong community.

By consensus the Hmong asked for instruction on:

a. Types of business organization
b. Insurance
c. Contracts
d. Permits and licenses

Funding and other assistance. The Yale students participated as part of their requirements for a graduate degree. The school supplied computer time, access to word processing equipment, funds to bring invited guests, and long distance phone calls. The State Coordinator's Office in Rhode Island provided the services of a staff person who acted as the go-between for the Hmong community and the Yale students. The Hmong provided meeting space and the time of the Hmong who served as clients and co-researchers.

Population served. About 20 Hmong, mostly leaders and younger bilingual men and a few women, participated. If any of the businesses go beyond the planning stages, then many more people will benefit.

Outcomes. Each of the four working groups produced a report that included all of the work accomplished, including detailed feasibility studies. The butcher store group found that a store selling freshly killed chicken would make a profit if approximately 80% of the Hmong population in Providence bought their weekly supply of chicken there, which was estimated to be 1.9 pounds per week and if the Hmong continued to prefer the taste of freshly killed poultry. Approximate amount of capitalization required: $30-35,000.

The lobster pot group found that while the Hmong had the skills to make lobster traps, a Hmong owned firm would have to sell half of all lobster traps bought annually in New England to make a profit. A promising lead on a new lobster trap design turned sour. The group concluded that the lobster trap industry was a low profit, highly competitive market that offered little chance of entry to an unknown group like the Hmong. On the basis of the feasibility study the Hmong decided to drop this business idea.

The scholarship group discussed ways in which the Hmong could form a non-profit association to raise money inside the Hmong community for the purpose of making scholarship grants or loans to qualified Hmong going on to college. Once the association had raised a sum of money through such varied activities as the showing of Kung-Fu movies, raffling chances on an offshore fishing expedition, sponsoring a Hmong arts festival and other events, the fund would raise matching contributions from area companies and foundations.

The teaching group developed four in-depth presentations on aspects of business that the Hmong requested. Each session included large and small group presentations, as well as teaching games to reinforce the lesson, vocabulary words, hand-outs and overhead projections.

Plans for expansion. All participants, both Hmong and American, realized at the end of the 6-month collaboration that further technical assistance was required if the Hmong were to continue with the poultry store and the scholarship association. The Yale group concluded that one semester's worth of technical assistance was not enough time for the Hmong to launch a business enterprise of their own.

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The Southeast Asian Co-op(Providence, Rhode Island)

Objective. In 1981, a group of Hmong and Americans founded the Southeast Asian Co-op to produce, promote and retail pa ndau, traditional Hmong needlework. The goals of the co-op are: (a) to supplement the income of Hmong women through the sale of pa ndau; (b) to keep the tradition of Hmong textile skills alive by creating a market; (c) to

teach Hmong women how to run their own cooperative business; and (d) to alert the community to the presence of the Hmong and part of their culture. Co-op organizers hoped to create a highly visible means of selling the Hmong handicraft in a way that maximized the amount of money for the producers.

Development and organization of the project. Supported by a $20,000 grant from a local foundation, a retail store was opened at one of the best addresses in downtown Providence. A full-time American manager and a half-time Hmong manager were hired. On Saturdays, the women bring their work to a central location. They set their own prices which they receive after an article has been sold. The co-op adds 25 percent to the price of each article to cover overhead. A dedicated band of American volunteers helps each week.

Funding and other assistance. The major boost to the Southeast Asian Co-op was the $20,000 grant obtained from a local community foundation through the regular application process. Recently, the co-op got a senior citizen to manage the store during the days through a special subsidized "hire the senior citizen" program. Throughout its existence the co-op has been sustained by a dedicated group of American volunteers who have served on the organization's Board of Directors. A special lease was negotiated with the owner of the indoor mall that charges the co-op a fixed percentage of sales. This helps the co-op better manage its cash flow. In November and December, when sales are high, the co-op pays a higher rent than the low sales period following Christmas.

Population served. The number of Hmong participating varies. At its high point, to date, 110 Hmong families were dues-paying members.

Outcomes. Approximately 1,500 pieces of pa ndau were sold at an average price of $20-30 each between October 1, 1980, and December 31, 1981, for a net sales of $50,000. During this period, the Southeast Asian Co-op was the largest selling retail outlet of pa ndau in the United States, according to a survey published by the Indochina Refugee Action Center, "Indochinese Craft Activity Information."

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V. Housing

Obtaining adequate housing has been a problem for Hmong in many communities, in part because their low incomes often limit them to substandard housing in ghetto areas, in part because few landlords have been anxious to rent to the large nuclear and extended families typical of the Hmong. Described in the preceding section of this volume, the Fort Smith Hmong community plan to establish their own housing on acreage they purchased provides an example of the concern shared by many Hmong to find adequate housing and to be able to live together.

Three strategies to obtain adequate housing are presented below. The first is an example of how a mutual assistance association can act as intermediary between tenants and landlord to the benefit of all concerned. The Southeast Asian Federation (SEARF) in Portland, Oregon, leases apartments from the landlord and guarantees full occupancy in return for lower rates. In the second example, a church in Providence, Rhode Island, has set up a program in which Hmong families receive advice from a real estate consultant regarding the purchase of two- and three-family low-cost houses. The third strategy is one used by individual Hmong families in Dallas-Fort Worth. There they have overcome problems of high interest rates, lack of credit and potential job insecurity by making large down payments. With substantial down payments they have found that credit checks are often relaxed and they can assume old mortgages (and thus obtain lower interest rates). To combat job insecurity, the Hmong home owners in Dallas try to pay off their mortgages as early as possible, oiten making great sacrifices at present for a more secure future.

Southeast Asian Refugee Federation (SEARF) Housing Project (Portland, Oregon)

Objective. This project was designed to provide low rent housing to low income Southeast Asian refugees. The demand for low income housing, particularly for refugees, is high in Portland.

Development and organization of the project. A local MAA, the Southeast Asian Refugee Federation (SEARF), leases apartment units from the landlord who owns them and in return SEARF guarantees 100% occupancy and provides orientation in the essentials of apartment care and dwelling, as well as conducts inspections and employs a bilingual apartment manager. The landlord, in agreeing to the lease arrangement, also agrees to take care of major repairs and a substantial lowering of rents (for instance, units that were originally $265/month are now $185/month).

The SEARF Housing Project has been in operation since July 1982. The idea began as part of a crisis planning strategy initiated by several agencies and interested individuals in anticipation of the impact of the April 1982 assistance cutoffs. One of these interested individuals, Denis Gilman, has previous experience in alternative neighborhood planning in Portland. He had been looking into the possibilities of City-funded urban development, that is, matching public funds with the community development needs of a low income neighborhood that didn't have the available capital to pursue individual projects. The Center for Urban Education (CUE), a non-profit organization in Portland, hired Gilman to strategize ways to provide emergency housing for refugees.

Gilman devised a plan whereby using CUE as fiscal agent, SEARF (which hadn't yet met the 3-year operating requirement necessary for non-profit status in Oregon) would guarantee a specific occupancy rate and a

specific monthly rental income for the building, as well as manage the building for the owner. Originally the plan was developed to take advantage of the tax-exempt status for properties controlled by non-profit organizations renting to low income individuals. Unfortunately, an adverse ruling by county taxing entities negated this possibility. However, the building owners allowed SEARF to continue to manage the apartments. Even without tax-exempt status for the property, the constant cash flow, the decrease in tenant turnover, and the elimination of management responsibilities were sufficient benefits for the property owners.

The key for the SEARF concept to work was finding a building with high vacancy rates and a significant amount of tenant turnovers. Such property will generate only a given amount of revenue over time. It will also consume significant amounts of the owners' time and energy. Some property owners would be interested if a reputable organization could show them how they could possibly increase the cash flow for their building, have better tenants, have an outside manager for the units, as well as rid themselves of all property management responsibilities.

The following example illustrates how the SEARF Housing Project concept works. Assume a hypothetical 20-unit building rents apartments for $250 per month and is experiencing a 35% vacancy rate. Annually this building will generate $39,000 in gross rents. The SEARF project would guarantee 100% occupancy, assume all management responsibilities (other than major repairs), provide an on-site bilingual manager, and conduct tenant orientations on the proper care and use of the building. In return, the building owner would lower the per unit rent. Even though the per unit rent would be lower, gross revenues would be the same or

higher. The decrease would be offset by revenues generated by increased occupancy. At 100% occupancy, the hypothetical 20-unit building could generate gross rental revenues 14% higher than before ($44,400), even with rents reduced to $185 per month (a 26% decrease in the rent per unit). In addition to a guaranteed cash flow and no property management expenditures, owners still accrue the normal tax shelters associated with income property: depreciation of the structure, deduction of interest payments, sales being taxed as capital gains, etc.

Refugees who want to live in these housing projects must complete an application which is used to determine eligibility. Qualifications include meeting low income guidelines (125% of poverty level), some source of income, and a minimum down payment of $100 which may be paid over several months. The waiting list is long and the turnover rate is low.

For those families who have some difficulty coming up with rent, some impact aid is available for a maximum of 2 months per year. Refugees can get emergency assistance from the housing authority, but they must bring an eviction notice. Perceiving that an eviction notice will damage their credit rating, they usually forego this option and borrow the rent money from relatives.

Housing applications are available through SEARF offices, and Hmong staff at SEARF are primarily responsible for Hmong community awareness of this service.

Funding. The project receives no direct funding, but administrative costs are subsidized by SEARF and CUE. While the on-site manager is paid from rent revenues, costs for certain administrative functions are absorbed by the two non-profit agencies. These include: bookkeeping,

supervising the on-site managers, and maintaining an applicant waiting list. In addition, CUE absorbed the costs of the individual who did most of the planning for the project.

Population served. Currently 52 families are living in two SEARF Housing Project locations (SEARF I and II).

Outcomes. The creation of low rent housing for 52 low income Southeast Asian refugee families has been the major accomplishment of the SEARF Housing Project. It is the first refugee-specific low income housing project in the region. Monthly rents for SEARF I and II are 35% lower than the average rent for units in the Portland metropolitan area. Low tenant turnovers and the long waiting list for units are an indication of the refugee community's acceptance of the project.

Another outcome of the project is more difficult to quantify, but is equally important. The success of the SEARF Housing project could facilitate the development of other refugee low income housing ventures. Any interested agency has a proven model to use. Denis Gilman, one of the designers of the project, states that:

> This kind of project is definitely duplicable in other cities. Some of it, of course, depends on the bad economy. In Midwestern and Northeastern cities it will probably be an option for some time to come. Even in better times, if you find a landlord with a marginal building that he has owned for a long time, it often is a relief to him to lease it out and not have to deal directly with tenants, turnover and damage.

Prospective landlords can be provided with physical evidence that the concept is viable. The success of SEARF I and II can be used to help overcome some earlier negative publicity that Southeast Asian refugees cause substantial damage to income property because many had no experience living in modern housing in their native country.

At this time there are two SEARF housing projects, SEARF I (32 units) and SEARF II (20 units). Currently, Hmong do not comprise a significant portion of the tenants. SEARF I is quite mixed ethnically: 18 Vietnamese families, 5 Cambodians, 6 Lao and 3 Hmong families. SEARF II is basically all ethnic Lao.

SEARF feels that added benefits to refugees accrue as several services, such as a Red Cross volunteer-taught English class, workshops by RAIN on urban survival strategies for low income families, and familiarization with proper care of apartment units are offered at the apartment complex.

Building owners have expressed satisfaction with the project. Besides a known cash flow and no property management responsibilities, their buildings are being treated well by the tenants. The on-site manager and tenant orientations help ensure that the tenants do not abuse the property.

Plans for expansion. SEARF plans to expand the operation and to hire another staff person to locate and develop possible sites.

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Home Ownership: St. Michael's Project Resettle (Providence, Rhode Island)

Objective. The purpose of this project is to show the Hmong the advantages of owning their own homes rather than simply renting. The second objective is to give the Hmong a reason for staying in one place instead of constantly moving around the country. The third objective is to improve the housing stock in the area by promoting home ownership.

Development and organization of the project. St. Michael's acts as a housing advocate and go-between for selected Hmong families who have been employed long enough to be considered "bankable" by a local lending institution. The church gets no money for their role; nor do the Hmong owe anything to the church. A program like this is possible because Providence has an ample supply of triple-decker Victorian homes in decent shape which can be purchased for a modest price. The three-story homes accommodate extended Hmong families in ways that apartments can not.

The project has been in operation for 2 years. Father Bill Taugway is the director. The project hired a real estate consultant and paid for translators. Housing in $20-30,000 price range is the target of this project. Some of these houses are two-family units, others are three-family units. The houses are livable or require up to $1,000 worth of cosmetic work. Mortgage payments range from $310-$450, including insurance and tax for an entire house. For a three-bedroom unit on one floor of a house, a family pays about $150 a month. By comparison, rents for an entire house range from $450-$600.

Banks require that at least two people in the household have jobs and at least 2 years of steady work history before they will consider multiple signatures on a mortgage. The project provides pre-purchase and post-purchase counseling for families who want to buy homes. In addition, the church provides a $1,500 grant which is matched by the Hmong family for down-payment and closing costs. Usually, the deed to the property is in one person's name so that the possibilities of the other house occupants to receive food stamps will not be jeopardized. Six people signed the mortgage for the first house the Project helped to negotiate.

Funding. The first year was supported by a $7,000 grant from the National Mercy Order. The second year was supported by a $5,500 grant from a local organization and supplemented by $2,000 from another parish. The third year's grant was $5,000. Funding in general comes from the parish and the United States Catholic Conference.

Population served. To date, seven homes have been purchased that together provide housing for 20 families.

Outcomes. The program works because of the unique Hmong family structure, according to its Director Fr. Taugway. It would not work with other residents of the neighborhood because they don't have as strong a family unit as the Hmong. In each case, the Hmong extended family unit decided in whose name the property would be listed. In one house owned by a nephew and two uncles, the nephew is the legal owner. In another instance, the owners are a father and his two sons.

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Home-buying in Dallas-Fort Worth (Texas)

Objective. Home-buying has proved to be an effective strategy for increasing economic self-sufficiency in the Hmong community in Dallas-Fort Worth. In addition to the economic benefits of purchasing rather than renting a house, many Hmong also see home-buying as a means of bringing the extended family together in one location to achieve a degree of stability and permanence after years of moving from one state to another since their initial resettlement.

Overcoming obstacles to home-ownership. Hmong families purchasing homes in the area have had to address several problems. The first was the selection of the house and the paperwork involved. Many said they did not know how to choose or buy a house. Few sought the help of realtors, initially, either because they did not know which company to go to, or because of communication difficulties. This problem was overcome by simply driving around until they found a house in a suitable location that seemed to meet their needs. After choosing a house, they contacted the realtor whose sign appeared in front of the house. Real estate agents then helped them with the paperwork and loan application. Realtors suggest, however, that a better method of locating a suitable house would have been to contact one or more realtors at the outset, since any agent should be able to show a variety of suitable houses to a family after finding out what their needs are and will do this without charge.

Second, to obtain a mortgage loan, a satisfactory credit rating and proof of 2 years of employment are generally required. While the latter has not been a problem, many Hmong have preferred to use cash in their financial transactions and have not established an adequate credit rating, with the exception of a few who have bought cars on credit in recent years. To overcome the problem of obtaining loans for home buying, the Hmong in the Dallas-Fort Worth area have developed a strategy of using savings to make large down payments, apparently with the result that credit requirements have been relaxed in some cases. These savings come largely from the families' earned income, accumulated a little at a time. Sometimes members of the extended family have been called upon to

contribute to a pool of savings to make the down payment. Families buying homes have included some with low-paying jobs as well as those with more education and good jobs. When savings were inadequate, sometimes two small families have joined up to buy a house together and share it.

According to a real estate agent in Grand Prairie, a suburb of Dallas where many Hmong are buying homes, if a buyer can make a down payment equal to the equity of the house (the difference between the loan balance and the price being asked), no credit check or proof of employment is necessary. It appears that some Hmong have been using this strategy, and others have been successful in getting loans by making large down payments, by taking out a second lien or making arrangements with the owner to pay off the equity in 3-5 years. According to the real estate agent consulted, the policy that allows this is based on the assumption that if a person makes that great an investment in a house he or she will not default on payments. On the other hand, in recently constructed housing developments where the construction company has been eager to sell the houses quickly, they have often asked for relatively low down payments, and for Hmong who have paid the down payment in cash, the credit and employment check has been fairly perfunctory.

By making large down payments, some Hmong have also been able to take over old mortgages from owners with low interest rates of 9% to 10%, while new mortgages in early 1983 have been at least 12%. At least one Hmong family interviewed, however, bought their house before the drop in interest rates in late 1982 and is paying 17-1/2% interest on their mortgage loan.

A third problem is the lack of job security for Hmong in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and, therefore, a concern about continuing payments in the future. While most Hmong in Texas have jobs now, unemployment is increasing, and because they have had little English language or job training, they are very vulnerable to layoffs. For this reason, most have not only made large down payments, but have also taken second liens or made deals with owners to pay off the equity in as short a period as possible, usually 2-5 years. After that time they will have to pay only the monthly mortgage payment, and as they point out, this would not continually increase, as in the case of the rent. While most Americans prefer to make a relatively low down payment in order to maintain an ample cash flow, Hmong families are stretching their ability to pay to the limit, often having difficulty even buying food by the end of the month, in order to ensure their ability to keep up payments in the future.

Extent of Hmong home-ownership in the area. Of the approximately forty-three families who have lived in the Dallas-Fort Worth area for a year or more (out of a total of up to 65 families in the area), 16 have bought homes, or slightly more than 35%. Most range in price from $37,000 to $45,000, and the highest surveyed was $59,500. Virtually all of the 16 families have purchased homes with either four bedrooms or three bedrooms with a garage that can be converted into another room. While several families mentioned the fact that they preferred to buy older homes with large trees, about an equal number have bought homes directly from home construction companies that have boomed since the lowering of interest rates in the last quarter of 1982.

Selection and financing of houses. A few examples will illustrate the Hmong strategy in home buying. In Grand Prairie two brothers recently pooled their savings and paid $11,000, or the entire equity on a house selling for $58,000. They bought the house from the owner and took over the owner's loan with a low interest rate, sharing a $604 monthly payment. Both brothers were working, as were their wives, and there was no need for a credit check.

A family in Dallas also recently made a down payment of $5,000 from savings on a house priced at $45,000. In addition to the mortgage, they took a second lien of $15,000 to pay off the equity of $20,000. Both payments together totaled about $500 monthly, as compared to the $385 they paid for rent before they bought the house. This family will have to make two payments for 10 years (longer than most Hmong home buyers), after which they will be paying only the mortgage payment. The interest rate on their loans is 11-3/4%. The first bank they approached for loans turned them down of the basis of lack of established credit. A second bank agreed to finance them on the basis of the cash down payment and the second lien to pay off the equity. The house was 18 years old, located in a very pleasant residential area of Dallas.

A third family bought a new house in a suburban development for $39,000. The construction company was eager to sell the houses quickly and was asking only $1,000 in down payment. When the Hmong family paid in cash, the company representative asked them where they worked and how much they earned. They do not know if any credit check was made. He also arranged the mortgage for them with a mortgage company. Their monthly payments are about $450 per month, and the interest rate is 11-1/2%. After the family moved into the house, they learned from

American neighbors who had bought identical houses the same year that the Americans were charged only $37,000 for their houses, $2,000 less than the Hmong paid. This Hmong family was renting a two-bedroom house for $200 per month before they bought their new home.

All three families said they drove around looking for houses to buy until they found one they liked from the outside. Each got the telephone number of the realtor or construction company from signs in front of the house and called the company to get more information. The second family looked for 3 months before choosing a house, and then waited 2 more months before making a final decision. All three looked upon home-buying as a way of increasing their self-sufficiency, but also saw the future of their families as a major concern in home-buying as well. All wanted adequate housing for an extended family, a yard for the children to play in, and ample space for a garden. The first family described feeling they are crowded now, but hope to buy a second house in the future with the savings that accrue from living together.

VI. Miscellaneous Strategies and Projects

The strategies remaining to be described concern the provision of health care and legal services for the Hmong and examples of how two rather unusual communities were formed.

In Cranston, Rhode Island, special attention has been given to the problem of providing adequate health care for the Hmong. A particular concern is understanding Hmong and American differences in beliefs and practices regarding health and illness and respecting, but reconciling those differences to facilitate the well-being of the Hmong. In the Rhode Island project just getting underway at the time of this Study, a Hmong health coordinator was to work directly with two full-time RNs to act as an intermediary between health service providers and the Hmong community, resolving misunderstandings, dispelling misinformation, helping individuals to keep their appointments and understanding any reluctance to do so, informing patients of their rights and providing information about treatment.

In Fresno, California, a dentist who has numerous Hmong clientele has hired a Hmong paraprofessional to insure that his patients understand the treatment they receive, as well as the procedures they should use to prevent further dental problems. Similarly, in Fresno, a lawyer has become interested in working with the Hmong and providing services that are sensitive to their cultural practices and beliefs.

The community formation experiences of the Hmong of Fort Smith, Arkansas, and of Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, are singled out here as examples of ways small communities have dealt with the issues of welfare dependence, employment and self-sufficiency. Fort Smith was formed by a

small, homogeneous group of Hmong in search of a way to get off welfare and find economic independence. They moved to Fort Smith, found jobs, and purchased land. However, they did not foresee problems such as low-paying, tedious jobs with little or no health care benefits. As noted in the introduction to this volume, their efforts in Fort Smith did not result as they had anticipated, and after the conclusion of this Study community members moved, either to Georgia, Wisconsin, or California.

The Hmong in the Dallas-Fort Worth area formed their community in a radically different way than those in Fort Smith, Arkansas. The Hmong in Texas have not moved there en masse; quite the opposite. They have moved only after a family member has found a job. Thus, the community boasts a high level of employment--although they are finding that entry-level jobs may not be as secure as they once seemed.

The Southeast Asian Health Coordination Plan (Cranston, Rhode Island)

Objective. The Hmong have difficulty understanding and utilizing the American health care system because of language and cultural barriers. Hmong and American resettlement workers spent inordinate amounts of time on health care issues. Health providers say that the Hmong are reluctant to use their facilities. Hmong medical practices and fears are not understood by most Western health providers. Many Hmong believe that hospitals perform experiments on Southeast Asians. Health care providers say the Hmong are the most distrustful of their Southeast Asian patients. A bridge between the two cultures' differing concepts of sickness and well being is needed to reduce mistrust caused by the recurring cultural barriers between Hmong and American health care providers.

Development and organization of the plan. The State Coordinator hired an Asian health service consultant named Lynn August to study the health care system as it affects refugees. Her report identified the objectives of the Southeast Asian refugees' health care system; assessed the health care services needed by the refugees; assessed the needs of the health care providers; assessed the existing health care resources; and formulated a set of recommendations.

The major recommendation of the study was that each of the four Southeast Asian ethnic groups in Rhode Island should hire an ethnic health coordinator. The four coordinators, supervised by two full-time RNs, would work between the health care providers and the refugee communities. The coordinators would be responsible for insuring that appointments for referral care are kept; that patients know why they were referred to a specialist and when, where and how they should seek such care; that refugees understand why they are hospitalized, understand their rights as patients and have an interpreter. The health care coordinator also would act as a liaison between the refugee patients and health professionals whenever necessary. If refugees decided to seek alternative care, the health coordinator would monitor their progress. If these refugees appeared not to improve, the health coordinator could suggest Western forms of treatment. Finally, the health coordinator would organize health education for and by the refugee communities. The MAA health coordinator would be supported by two RNs.

The recommendation was accepted and the program is scheduled to begin in the early summer of 1983. The organization of the Southeast Asian Health Coordination Plan utilizes mutual assistance associations (MAAs)

from each ethnic group. The supporting RNs are to be hired through a competitive contract based on replies to a request for proposal from qualified hospitals, clinics and nursing associations.

Funding. Funds for the Southeast Asian Health Coordination Plan are drawn from three sources: refugee program social services funds, an incentive grant for the utilization of mutual assistance associations as service providers from the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, and targeted assistance funds awarded to Providence County by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement.

Outcome. Evaluation of the Southeast Asian Health Coordination Plan will be done by analyzing the following variables: time spent by the Indochinese case managers on health care matters; dental visits made by Southeast Asians; compliance rates by Southeast Asians for follow-up care; Southeast Asian health status; and Southeast Asian patient satisfaction.

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Group Legal Services (Fresno, California)

Objective. Using space in the Lao Family Community office in Fresno, a branch office of a legal firm based in San Jose, California, has been established to offer low-cost, group legal services to Hmong families in the Fresno area.

Hmong families, adjusting to new homes in Fresno as well as elsewhere across the country, have faced a range of legal problems that have been difficult to address because they do not speak English well, do not understand the legal system in the United States, often cannot afford (or think they cannot afford) legal assistance. Common legal problems include the elderly's loss of eligibility for Supplemental Social Security Benefits (SSI) because their ages were reported incorrectly on forms in Thailand, and problems with the criminal justice and family court systems because of cultural differences in handling certain problems (e.g., young marriage, divorce).

Development and funding of the project. Started entirely as a private venture, the law office, housed within but organizationally independent of the Lao Family Community (the local Hmong MAA), is funded through membership fees and fees for services provided to members. For a relatively nominal fee ($35), members and their immediate families can come in for routine assistance with problems ranging from traffic tickets to administrative forms and procedures. Other kinds of assistance are available on a fee-for-service basis (except for civil suits, for which contingent fees are charged), generally well below rates charged by other lawyers in private practice.

Organization of the legal assistance. Bilingual young Hmong adults are employed by the law office as receptionist and paralegal assistant. These individuals are well known to the community and are familiar, trustworthy persons who attract Hmong clientele to the office as word spreads that legal services can be obtained in a familiar, bilingual

setting. The paralegal assistant does much of the routine intake and the administrative tasks and serves as an interpreter in situations involving other legal staff. The assistant also serves as a Hmong interpreter for court proceedings. The legal office is managed by Sam Alvidrez, a well-known Fresno resident. Although Mr. Alvidrez is not an attorney, he works under the supervision of a practicing attorney with whom he regularly consults to determine the best way to handle clients' problems. Frequent consultations are also made with staff of the Lao Family Community when information about community relations or cultural practices is needed in the conduct of particular cases.

Benefits. Several hundred families have been enrolled as members of the group legal services, open to all Hmong living in the Fresno area. Many now have access to low-cost legal services in a comfortable, bilingual context. A wide variety of cases has been successfully handled to date, including traffic, civil, criminal and family court cases, as well as issues of administrative law involving local, state and federal agencies.

The expertise that the legal staff is gaining through specializing in Hmong cases represents a benefit for the Hmong community as a whole. For example, many elderly Hmong have their age substantially understated in documents prepared when they immigrated to the United States. There seem to be two factors associated with this pattern. First, of course, is that most of the elderly Hmong had never kept track of their chronological ages (birth certificates were not used in the highlands). Second, there were fears in the refugee camps that the elderly would not

be allowed to immigrate to the United States if their true ages were known, so some ages tended to be understated on I-94 and other documents. (It cannot be assumed, however, that the elderly persons involved knew that this was happening since they typically did not fill out the relevant forms or speak directly to the officials who did.) In such cases, individuals who otherwise would be entitled to monthly SSI benefits for the elderly could not receive benefits unless their official ages were corrected. This problem had persisted for years. The Group Legal Services manager reported that some progress was finally made when a court ordered an agency to correct a client's age in a case where information could be used to establish the individual's true age. After favorable rulings in several such cases, the manager reported, a relatively straightforward administrative procedure was developed with the agency for correcting an individual's age. Although the number of such cases that can now be handled in this way is unknown, it is clear that many families--and the community as a whole--will benefit directly and substantially.

Other benefits will accrue to the community in a similar way from the development of expertise regarding other problems as well. Promising developments, for example, are on the horizon for utilizing special procedures in the family court system to allow traditional marriage regulation practices to function in cases involving youth who must have parental permission to marry.

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Special Dental Practice (Fresno, California)

Ojective. The private dental practice of an Asian dentist in Fresno illustrates how the care and commitment of professionals to a Hmong community can benefit everyone involved. The objective of this strategy is to offer special services to Hmong clientele (patients) to encourage their patronage; by building up a large concentration of Hmong clients, professionals can afford to provide the special services that matter to their Hmong customers. In this way, both the business or practice involved and the Hmong benefit directly.

Organization and benefits of the practice. A young Hmong woman, married to a prominent member of the Hmong community, was hired to assist the dentist. Word soon spread that a Hmong was working in the dentist's office, which made his services particularly attractive; Hmong patients did not need to arrange for an interpreter to accompany them and could speak directly over the phone to arrange appointments. The bilingual practice quickly became the preference of nearly all the Hmong in Fresno, and everyone benefitted. Hundreds of Hmong are served each year in this practice.

The Formation of a Hmong Colony in Fort Smith (Arkansas)

Among the thousands of Hmong refugees in Southern California in 1978 was a group of related families belonging to the Heu, Xiong, and Yang clans and to the so-called Blue Hmong dialect group, all from Xieng Khouang province in northeastern Laos. Members of these families had been converted to Christianity in Laos by missionaries of the Christian

Missionary Alliance in the 1950s. After fleeing from Laos to refugee camps in Thailand, they had been resettled in California. There some found employment in a variety of skilled and unskilled jobs while others, especially those over 40 who like other older Hmong had little education and little success in learning English, were supported by public assistance programs. The unemployed were distressed at the idea of living on charity. They were losing self-respect, and they did not want their children to grow up seeing their parents unemployed and unable to support their own families. They were also sick of filing applications and all of the other governmental red tape that welfare dependence entails. They wanted to do whatever was necessary to become economically independent--not only to obtain better jobs, but to get into farming or some other business they owned themselves. A family business could achieve several goals at once; employment for many family members, less need for all family members to speak English, and most important, independence from welfare and an unpredictable American employer.

These families kept in touch with relatives who had moved to Salt Lake City and other relatives scattered around the U.S. Many were less well off than those in California. At the beginning they considered the idea of farming in California. But it was obvious to them that high rents and the high price of land in California made this impossible.

Then, by chance, a new possibility presented itself. An American man and his family who had befriended some of them in Santa Ana moved back to their home town of Fort Smith, Arkansas. The Hmong in Santa Ana called and asked these people's advice about relocating to a place where there

might be more jobs and greater opportunities for farming or an agriculture-related business. Their friend suggested that they might consider several sites, including Fort Smith.

One member of the California group then went to Fort Smith to look over the possibilities. He liked what he saw. When he returned to California, he reported his impressions. The warm climate, the lush vegetation, and the small farms with chickens and pigs reminded him of Laos. There was no welfare program to assist them and few refugee services, but that was seen as a plus: There might be less government interference in their lives. The Vietnamese and Lao refugees in Fort Smith, he reported, had found jobs in manufacturing, and there were jobs available in the poultry industry that one could get into and out of easily. Most important, he found that rents and the price of houses and farm land were much lower than in California.

After consultation among the relatives, a decison was reached to begin planning a move that, if successful in the first stages, would eventually establish a new Hmong colony in Fort Smith--not a heterogeneous collection of Hmong, but a unified community of families related by blood and the social bonds resulting from marriages between clans, members of a single Christian congregation, united in their religious faith as well as in their desire for economic independence and self-sufficiency. They conceived their plan as initiating a true beginning for a new life in America, after the false start of 2 or more years of dependence under the federal government's Refugee Resettlement Program.

The move to Fort Smith did not take place all at once or by a single decision, but rather by stages. In November, 1979, two families living on welfare in California moved out with the help of their American friend, who flew out from Fort Smith and then drove back with them. After they arrived, their friend gave the men jobs with his construction business. The women found work in the local poultry processing industry. A year after arrival both families bought houses--1920s bungalows in the older part of town. One of them cost $27,000; the mortgage payments are $290 a month. During their first year in Fort Smith these two families sponsored two others to join them direct from Thailand.

The relatives still in California were impressed by the early success of the families in Fort Smith. Some came to visit and liked what they saw as much as the earlier "scout" had. After further discussions, other families started to move to Fort Smith from California in May, 1981. For the next year and a half others joined them from Oklahoma, Illinois, Utah, and other states, until there were over 50 Hmong households in Fort Smith.

Meanwhile, however, the settlement was affected by the general economic slump that took place during this period. The first two settlers were laid off from their construction jobs, and while they managed to find other fairly good jobs, others were not so fortunate. While almost every family found some employment, nearly all of it was in low paying jobs in the local poultry plants. Persons with both job skills and a reasonable command of English, who had earned a decent

living before coming to Fort Smith, found themselves either among the unemployed or in the same situation as those with few skills and little English, working at the unskilled jobs of cutting and deboning chickens. As of March, 1983, two families had no employment and were being supported by food stamps and the contributions of other members of the Hmong community.

The dream that brought these people to Fort Smith was not, in any case, full employment, but the idea of becoming self-employed by acquiring land and farming it, raising livestock, and creating their own business enterprises. But with the low wages they received and the bills they incurred in connection with childbirth and hospitalization for illness they did not have the means to develop these plans. Not only could they not save the money needed as capital for these enterprises, but what savings they had when they arrived were rapidly depleted. By the spring of 1983, some families had debts of thousands of dollars for hospital bills, and others were just getting by.

Thus the plans for economic independence for the most part remain just dreams. To move ahead, these Hmong families need to raise some capital and they don't know where to turn. Having no local sponsors and few friends or other contacts in the local community, they seem isolated from the assistance they might otherwise receive from local agencies and individuals.

It is not the case, however, that their dreams remain entirely unfulfilled. Early in the settlement process 13 families pooled savings they had brought with them from California to jointly purchase a 13-acre parcel of uncleared rural land, on which they hoped to build houses and a

church. This land is now being used for garden plots in the summer, while clearing still goes on. Also, a group of families have leased land and bought cattle to graze on it, which they sell or slaughter for their own tables. (Both of these endeavors have been described earlier in this volume.) In December, 1982, the Asia Food Store was opened in a leased building, mainly to sell Asian food items for their own consumption. The store is a cooperative; it was initiated by 14 Hmong families who again dug into their meager savings to make an investment that would benefit the community as a whole. The rear half of the store serves as a makeshift church and meeting hall for the Hmong community. The store is self-supporting, but capital is lacking for the expansion of merchandise that could make it a profit-making operation.

Part of the plan of "colonization" was that a community should be formed that shared common beliefs and goals. The community is formally organized (apart from kinship) in two ways. They have their own religious congregation with a Hmong pastor as leader and various church officers. And since December, 1982, they have also been organized as a branch of Lao Family Community, Inc. There is no recognition of clan differences in either of these organizations. All are equal members without distinction. It has seemed important to them that others who might come to join the community share their beliefs and dreams--that they be willing to participate in their church and in their economic development efforts. While one or two families have come who do not satisfy these expectations, they try to make this idea of unity of purchase clear to any family that proposes to come to Fort Smith from elsewhere.

The specific embodiments of the enduring dream of these Hmong for the future show it to be, to some extent, a dream of returning to the old life in Laos--to live in a village apart from others, to engage all members of the family, especially the elders, in farming, to raise chickens and pigs and grow rice, to be able to use their native language for most day-to-day purposes. But their plans are not out of touch with reality. They have recently begun to seek advice from Americans, including county agricultural extension agents, on the potential for various crops and the marketing possibilities for crops and livestock. They have drawn up detailed plans for the organization and layout of a poultry processing plant of their own. They want their children to be well educated, and they assume that the younger generation will aspire to a variety of jobs outside their own community.

Friends and relatives around the country have expressed an interest in leaving states where they are subsisting on welfare to join the Hmong community in Fort Smith. For the moment the Fort Smith Hmong are telling these people not to come, until there are jobs or their economic development plans can be realized.

For those already in Fort Smith the year 1983 is a crucial time. Some have already reached a state of desperation. Some outside assistance, in the form of job development or technical assistance for farming, appears to be critically needed if they are to survive and thrive under present economic conditions. There is talk of resigning themselves to failure and returning to welfare dependence, or of staging a protest to the government or to the United Nations, and even of suicide. Whether their experiment in refugee-initiated planned migration

and economic development, and their goal of freedom from the bonds of dependence on public welfare, will ultimately succeed is still very much in doubt.*

Dallas-Fort Worth Hmong Resettlement Philosophy (Texas)

There are currently an estimated 50 to 65 Hmong families in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Unlike the situation in other Hmong communities, these Hmong families are not all crowded together in lower socio-economic neighborhoods. Rather, they are scattered throughout the larger society. Many own homes in surburban areas of the metroplex. Most of the 50 families moved to the area as secondary migrants. Relatively few Hmong families who originally were resettled in Dallas remain there.

The reason Dallas-Fort Worth was selected by the Hmong families who have moved there is that there have been relatively good job opportunities for the Hmong in this area. Although the jobs are not extraordinarily high-paying, they seem to be satisfactory for many Hmong refugees. The State of Texas does not give welfare or other assistance benefits to Hmong refugees, so whoever moves to Dallas moves with the intention of finding employment.

The Hmong leaders encourage heads of household to come to Dallas-Fort Worth alone at first, leaving families behind. The head of household stays with relatives while searching for a job. Once a job has been secured, he will usually find an apartment for his family with the help of his relatives. If his family is small, he may plan to have them all

*As noted, this Hmong community subsequently dispersed to Georgia, Wisconsin and California.